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LORD MELBOURNE

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LORD MELBOURNE'S PAPERS

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EDITED BY LLOYD C. SANDERS

WITH A PREFACE
BY
THE EARL COWPER, K.G.

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PREFACE

I HAVE BEEN ASKED to write a Preface to this volume, partly in order to make known that the letters contained in it have been selected with my sanction and approval from those in my possession, and partly in hopes that my relationship to Lord Melbourne and my early recollections of him may enable me to throw some light upon his personality. I wish with all my heart that the last reason was as good as the first; but I fear that the task of drawing his character is above my capacity, and that my relationship and the early recollections which are its consequence are in my way rather than otherwise in making the attempt.

I can only myself remember him when I was a boy, and after he had been attacked by his first paralytic stroke, and I have visions of a somewhat massive though not corpulent figure reclining in an arm-chair, a white or nearly white head, shaggy eyebrows, and a singularly keen and kindly eye, fits of silence occasionally broken by an incisive and rather paradoxical remark, accompanied by a genial laugh and a rubbing of the hands together. I remember also noticing how easily the tears came into his eyes, not so much, as I have heard it said, at anything tender or affecting, as at the expression of a noble or generous sentiment.

These glimpses, which I can myself recall, are, as I have said, rather in my way than otherwise in drawing his character. The image which I wish to form of the experienced and sagacious statesman in the full maturity of his powers is continually blurred by my remembrance of the shattered invalid. There was, of course, in those days very little left of that exuberant vitality which has been noted as one of his most marked characteristics.

This peculiar gift, this exuberant vitality, this 'rude, handsome manliness,' as it has been called, is to be taken as the leading trait of his character before his illness, but it must be taken in conjunction with other things. It was tempered by a vein of thoughtfulness, a touch of melancholy, as much concealed as it was in the nature of a very open, unaffected man to conceal anything. With all his genial, almost boisterous heartiness upon occasions, he was in reality a sensitive man, and every sensitive man must in self-defence very often wear a mask. His mask was an assumption of reckless indifference. This has been made the subject of a famous satire by Sydney Smith—a satire so skilfully drawn, so exquisitely witty, and at the same time so good-humoured, that its extreme caricature is at first sight hardly visible, and it has actually been put down in grave histories as a portrait. It is such good reading, and bears such strong testimony to Lord Melbourne's conscientiousness and hard work, that I hope the reader will turn to it; but let him remember that it is a caricature, not a portrait. It is to be found in the second letter to Archdeacon Singleton.

The sting of this satire—and a sting was of course

intended—lies in the implied charge of conscious affectation, a foible altogether inconsistent with the transparent simplicity of Lord Melbourne's character. That his devil-may-care manner often disguised both his extensive knowledge of the matter in hand and his deep anxiety to find the right course, is quite true. But how difficult it is to analyse manner and to trace the source from which it springs! Education, circumstances, natural disposition, all conspire to form it. There is hardly a man possessed of originality of thought, and that delicacy of feeling which often accompanies it, who does not take refuge behind a veil of some sort. Most frequently the disguise assumes the form of a cold and distant reserve; but Lord Melbourne's nature was too genial, his spirits were too high, his love of life was too great, for this. He shrouded himself under an exterior of jovial indifference, and at the same time this jovial indifference was not always a shroud, for he was really indifferent about small things. His frequent apparent concealment of the extent of his knowledge of the matter in hand came, I think, partly from horror of the opposite affectation of greater knowledge than exists, and partly from the fact that his knowledge was often rather that of general principles than of details. While I am anxious to refute the charge of affectation, I admit with gratitude that Sydney Smith has done his friend's memory a good service by pointing out that the *poco curante* manner, the apparently light tone in which he often treated serious subjects, concealed a strenuous application to business, and a deep and genuine anxiety to do his duty to the best of his ability. That he felt

most keenly the heavy weight of labour and responsibility which attended his position is, to my mind, proved only too clearly by the paralytic stroke which made its appearance, as is so often the case in similar circumstances, just as the strain began to be relaxed.

One of Lord Melbourne's characteristics, which I must not pass over, was his insatiable love of reading, and the vast store of knowledge which he had collected. His life was particularly fortunate in enabling him to do this. His sound classical education and close acquaintance with the ancients he possessed in common with most of the eminent men of his generation. But men who rise to eminence have in general, after they attain manhood, very little time even to keep up what they have already acquired, much less to read deeply in new directions. Lord Melbourne did not enter upon any real or absorbing business till he was nearly fifty years old, and though he undoubtedly suffered in some respects from want of those habits of method and punctuality which early apprenticeship to business can alone give, he was enabled by the same cause to collect together an almost unprecedented amount of learning on almost every subject. The same circumstances, the fact of his having been for many years what is commonly called a man of leisure, gave him the practice and the power of continually drawing upon his vast stores for the entertainment of others in the simplest and most natural manner. He was a man saturated with information, which was continually bubbling over in an original and sometimes fantastic form.

Mr. Torrens's Life, possibly in an abridged edition, with the extraneous matter omitted, will probably be

the standard biography of Lord Melbourne, and as far as the main facts are concerned, and the solid qualities of his mind and his high character, there is not much to be added or desired; but the whole personality of the man, the eccentricity and the brilliancy and the warmth, have disappeared.

Hayward's essays represent something of the wit and the originality, the unstudied careless grace; but the nobility of nature, and the genuine conscientiousness, which underlay the superficial indolence and recklessness, have been very much left out.

There are some striking lines in the first Lord Lytton's poem, 'St. Stephen's;' but the best description of Lord Melbourne is to be gathered from the 'Greville Memoirs.' It would be very unfair in regard to him or anybody else to isolate particular passages of an author whose chief charm and chief merit arise from the spontaneity of his writing. Every impression of the moment, from the highest admiration down to a feeling bordering upon contempt, is recorded and left unaltered, however inconsistent with previous or subsequent passages in the same book. In Part II. Vol. III. p. 241, there is a very able and elaborate character, one of the best that Greville ever drew—and how admirable his characters are! He wishes to be impartial and discriminating, and I think he has succeeded as far as success was possible. It is after reading this that I can most nearly picture Lord Melbourne to myself. Where he a little fails, in my opinion, is in his reference to his unhappy married life. There was more tenderness and more real manliness exhibited in connection with that painful and unpleasing story than is

to be gathered from this passing allusion. As to the political career, too, we must remember that Greville, though he lived very much with the Whigs, was in his principles a Tory of the old type; while Lord Melbourne, though he was almost too acutely able to see both sides of every question, was fundamentally and in all essentials a genuine though moderate Liberal, brought up from his earliest youth under the influence of Charles James Fox. We can understand, therefore, that when during his official career the position which he had so long taken up was suddenly assailed on a new side, from the Radical, not the Conservative direction, he may have shown a certain amount of hesitation which to one who was indiscriminately opposed to all Reform and all Liberalism was difficult to understand.

The views with regard to Parliamentary Reform which Lord Melbourne consistently adopted were that it was desirable on the whole to leave the matter alone but that if anything was done at all, it should be done thoroughly. It seems strange, therefore, that he should even for one moment have allowed himself to be entangled with the Waverers, and their wretched attempt to snatch back with one hand little handfuls of what was being offered to the people with the other. If they had had their way, they would have saved nothing of any real advantage to anybody, while they would altogether have spoilt the moral effect of the measure by creating an impression that what was yielded was yielded entirely under the influence of fear, and only in as small a quantity as possible. It could only have been from his love of listening to arguments on every

side of every question that he was led into corresponding with them at all.

Another matter in connection with which Charles Greville accuses him of vacillation is the Syrian question in 1840. It was Lord Palmerston, and not he, who originated the hazardous but successful policy pursued on this occasion. An able Foreign Secretary can always, in matters of this kind, commit a Government too deeply to allow of a retreat. Lord Melbourne felt a certain amount of anxiety, and may have shown it indiscreetly; but it was evidently exaggerated by Greville, who derived all his information from what he calls the Peace Party, and whose information was manifestly distorted. Lord Melbourne may also have shown a too intense desire to conciliate all parties. But there is nothing in the letters here published to confirm the charge of vacillation. He consistently supported Lord Palmerston, and held fast to the conviction that, though to yield to France might remove existing difficulties, to show any fear of her would inevitably produce war at a future period.

The too intense desire, which I have mentioned, to conciliate all parties in his rickety Government and at all hazards to keep it together has always been considered a blot upon the last two years of his administration, and the task it involved must have been a sore trial to his high spirit. But he evidently decided that under the circumstances his first duty was to the Queen, and that to allow his Government to collapse while he still had a majority, however small, in the House of Commons, and while the feeling in the country was still an unknown quantity, would place

a young and inexperienced Sovereign in an unfair position. Is it clear that his decision was wrong?

There are, as I have said, enough materials already in print to enable the reading public to form a fair notion of Lord Melbourne's character and career. But the matter contained in this volume is almost all of it new, and a great deal of it very interesting.

The letters from Glasgow at the beginning are to my mind disappointing, and it would have required at the time a good judge of character to predict from their perusal the future eminence of the writer. There is a self-sufficiency and priggishness in the youth who wrote them difficult to reconcile with the man as he presented himself in after life. It was Lord Melbourne, not Sydney Smith, who said, 'I wish I was as cock-sure of anything as Tom Macaulay is of everything'; but we see now that he had had his own period of cock-sureness like most other people. They show, however, an active and inquiring mind, and a keen interest in politics, and they throw a light upon his pursuits and friendships which justifies their publication.

More interesting than these boyish effusions is the journal of Lord Melbourne's early Parliamentary life, and more interesting still the letters to his colleagues while he was in office. But they are comparatively few in number, as I shall explain by-and-by, and I confess that, judging from the traditions of his conversation, I was disappointed when I first read them at their not being more brilliant. But it must be remembered that they were written simply and solely with a view to the purpose in hand. The entire absence of display and

the utter unconsciousness of a future reader are in themselves a considerable merit; and though these letters are unequal, and not always written with facility, they seem to me occasionally to evince a peculiar directness and originality which, on literary considerations alone, would entitle them to respectful attention. Anyone who has formed an impression of the writer's turn of mind from other sources will, I think, discern in them a tendency kept under restraint, but constantly escaping from it, to connect the matter in question with some general principle. I fancy I can see signs here and there of a secret temptation to indulge in startling paradox and copious illustration. But it was steadily resisted, and it is as a testimony to his strong sound sense and painstaking attention to business that they are chiefly valuable.

The Home Office must in his day have been a most laborious office, for in addition to the heavy work which it entails now it comprised then the general direction of Irish administration, and both England and Ireland were in a very disturbed and excited condition. The correspondence of this period is chiefly connected with the preservation of law and order.

As Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne's actions are of course suggestive of so much comment that if I yielded to my inclination I should enlarge my Preface to an outrageous extent. In addition to points which I have already incidentally touched upon, I will only allude to the charge brought against him by Miss Martineau, in one of her most unfair chapters, of neglecting to defend Lord Durham's Canadian conduct when challenged in the House of Lords.

Whether Lord Melbourne had been altogether cowed by Lord Brougham, as alleged by Miss Martineau, may be decided by glancing at the debates of the period. It is true that he did not always answer him, and on one occasion the Leader of the House of Commons remonstrated with him on the subject, when he replied, 'The fact is, my dear John, the fellow was in such a state of excitement that if I had said a word to him he would have gone stark staring mad.' This I heard from Lord Russell himself. 'I admit that he might have answered him more constantly than he did. I admit also, and it would be absurd to deny, that Lord Brougham was much the better speaker of the two, but it is against all evidence to say that Lord Melbourne ever showed himself in the smallest degree afraid of him.

But, to return to Lord Durham, Lord Melbourne, it will be seen, never made any secret of his dislike and distrust of him. He was bitterly annoyed at his appointment of Mr. Turton, which he was evidently not prepared for, though Miss Martineau says he was. But the letters in this volume show clearly that after the quarrel had begun he was much more inclined to be conciliatory to Lord Durham than many of his colleagues. If he failed on any occasion in his attempt to back him up in the House of Lords, the attempt was honestly made, and I see no reason to doubt his own explanation that he was deliberately and persistently left without materials for the purpose.

It has been said with truth that the great question about Lord Melbourne's life, as to which our public has not yet made up its mind, is what part he really took

in the administration of his own Government. Everybody allows his personal charm, his knowledge, his originality of mind, and his upright and honourable character. But did he really govern the country, or was he a mere figure-head—or, rather, what intermediate position did he fill between the two?

There are few things so difficult to determine as the exact place which a Prime Minister fills among his colleagues. The Duke of Wellington, we know, did everything himself, and his Government very soon collapsed in consequence. Pitt and Palmerston are commonly supposed to have been very autocratic; though there is little doubt that the first leant very much upon Dundas; and one of Lord Palmerston's colleagues has told me that his power in his Cabinet has been much exaggerated out of doors. It is very possible, on the other hand, that Lord Liverpool and Lord Aberdeen may have exercised more controlling force than is generally imagined. I, of course, avoid all allusion to living people.

A false estimate of predominant influence behind the scenes may be raised, sometimes by Parliamentary position, and sometimes by self-assertion. Lord Melbourne had no self-assertion. As long as the work was done, he cared very little who had the credit of it. As to Parliamentary position, though his speeches were generally racy and vigorous, I do not know that his abilities were of the kind to enable him to gain it, and his being in the House of Lords put it altogether out of the question. In these days the want of Parliamentary position incident to a seat in the House of Lords is very much made up for by the copious practice of

making speeches throughout the country; but in Lord Melbourne's time such a thing was almost unknown.

We are driven, therefore, to form our notion of his weight in the Cabinet almost entirely from his correspondence; and here, again, he is unfortunate. He was not a methodical man. He burnt many of the letters addressed to him, and he very seldom kept a copy of his own. The materials, therefore, which have been collected in the present book are very imperfect. They must be considered as a small sample, accidentally preserved, of what would have been a very voluminous collection. But, imperfect as they are, they throw considerable light upon his real position, and, as I venture to suggest, not by any means to his disadvantage.

I have been asked to acknowledge with thanks, on behalf of the Editor, letters lent for publication by the Hon. Mrs. Trotter, Miss Jane Whately, and Mr. Hugh Hammersley, and to express his obligations to Lord Bessborough, and Lord Stanley of Alderley, who have had search made among their papers, though, unfortunately, without success. I must be allowed also on my own initiative to call the reader's attention to the generous self-effacement of the Editor in confining his own work to such connecting and explanatory remarks as were absolutely necessary, and to the clear, concise, and admirable manner in which he has performed his task.

COWPER.

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THE PAPERS
OF
LORD MELBOURNE

CHAPTER I

YOUTH

1779–1805

THE ancestors of Lord Melbourne, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, pursued the professional walks of life. We find that a Mr. Matthew Lambe was then a practitioner, or attorney, of long standing at Southwell, and the legal adviser of the Cokes of Melbourne Hall, an old family, one of whose members, Sir John Coke, was Secretary of State during the early part of the reign of Charles I.[1] Matthew Lambe died on January 29, 1735, leaving a fortune of 100,000*l.* to his two sons, Robert and Matthew, in order of succession. Already the death in the previous year of an uncle named Peniston, who had been a highly successful 'pleader under the bar,' and who died a bachelor, had placed Robert Lamb in a position of affluence. He entered the Church, and by a rapid course of preferment became Dean, and eventually Bishop of Peterborough. As he, too, died unmarried, his wealth passed to the son of his brother Matthew.

[1] Two interesting volumes of abstracts made from the MSS. at Melbourne Hall, by Mr. William Dashwood Fane, were published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission in 1888. They cover the period from 1551 to 1702.

This Matthew must have been a man of more than ordinary ability. He embraced his uncle's profession, and rapidly extended his business, becoming perpetual Solicitor to the Revenue of the Post Office, and the confidential adviser of Lord Salisbury and Lord Egmont. Equally fortunate in love, he won, in 1740, the hand of Miss Charlotte Coke, who, on the unexpected death of her brother some seven years afterwards, inherited the family estates, including Melbourne Hall. To these considerable possessions Matthew Lamb added Brocket Hall, by purchase from the representatives of Sir Thomas Winnington, in 1746. His life, in fact, was one course of steady prosperity; he was already a member of Parliament, sitting for Stockbridge, and afterwards for Peterborough, and in 1755 he was created a baronet. He died in 1768, leaving to his only son, Peniston, property estimated at nearly half a million, besides half a million in ready money which the latter squandered aimlessly.[1]

At the time of his father's death Sir Peniston Lamb was in his twenty-fourth year. Of an easy disposition, and without any marked abilities, he was ill-qualified to push the fortunes of the family through his own exertions. But he had the good luck and good taste to marry Elizabeth, the only daughter of Sir Ralph Milbanke, one of the most gifted and fascinating women of her time.[2] In the year after his marriage Sir Peniston, who in the House of Commons was a silent follower of Lord North, was created an Irish Baron by the title of Baron Melbourne of Kilmore, and an Irish Viscount in 1781. On the formation of the Household of the Prince of Wales he was named Gentleman of the Bed Chamber; and created an English Peer in 1815. There cannot be much doubt that he owed his social advancement to the influence of his wife, concerning

[1] Some of these details are taken from a paper by Mr. Richard Sprye, an antiquarian who was commissioned by Lord Melbourne to make researches into the past history of the Lambs.

[2] Six children were the issue of the marriage: Peniston, born in 1770, who died unmarried in 1805; William, born in 1779; Frederick, born in 1782, who entered the diplomatic service and became Baron Beauvale, succeeding to Lord Melbourne's title after his death; George, born in 1784, who at the time of his death in 1834 was Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department; Emily Mary, born in 1787, who became, first, Lady Cowper, and, secondly, Lady Palmerston; and Harriet Anne, born in 1789, who died unmarried in 1803.

whose abilities the verdict of her contemporaries is nearly unanimous. Horace Walpole, indeed, sneers at her after his wont, when he represents her as standing before the fire at Mrs. Meynel's, and adjusting her feathers in the glass. 'Says she, "Lord! they say the Stocks will blow up: that will be very comical!"'[1] But the remark may perhaps be interpreted as a satire on the jargon of the Stock Exchange; and even if Horace Walpole disliked her, he was certainly in a minority. Byron was only echoing the opinion of society when he described her in his Diary, under the date November 24, 1813, as 'The best friend I ever had in my life, and the cleverest of women. I write with most pleasure to her, and her answers are so sensible, so *tactique*. I never met with half her talent.'[2] Her son's verdict was, perhaps, more partial, but it was the same: 'Ah, my mother was a most remarkable woman; not merely clever and engaging, but the most sagacious woman I ever knew. She kept me right as long as she lived.'[3]

William Lamb, who was born on March 15, 1779, was his mother's favourite child. She early recognised his abilities, and set herself to form his character, cautioning him especially against the acquirement of selfish habits.[4] His boyhood was passed, for the most part, at Brocket, partly also, no doubt, at Melbourne House, Piccadilly—now the Albany—which had been purchased from Lord Holland, the father of Charles James Fox, in 1770, and which soon became an important social and political centre, among its visitors being the Prince of Wales, Charles James Fox, Sheridan, Fitzpatrick, and the other leaders of the Whig connection. At the age of ten he was portrayed by Sir Joshua Reynolds, together with his brothers, Peniston and Frederick, in the fine picture, 'The Affectionate Brothers'; and in after-life he was fond of describing to artists his sittings to the veteran President.[5] 'I remember Reynolds,' he told Haydon. 'He was a hard-working old dog. When I sat to him he looked too hard to be happy.' But hard-working though Sir

[1] Walpole's *Letters*, ed. Cunningham, vol. vii. May 12, 1778.

[2] Moore's *Life of Byron*, p. 379.

[3] Torrens, *Memoirs of Lord Melbourne*, vol. i. p. 134.

[4] See an extract from a letter of Lord Melbourne's to Miss Emily Eden, given in her *Letters from India*, vol. i. p. 5.

[5] Haydon's *Autobiography*, vol. ii. p. 343; Leslie, *Autobiographical Recollections*, pp. 169–170.

Joshua was, he was enough of a diplomatist to coax the child to sit a little longer by giving him a ride on his foot. Lamb went to Eton in 1790, but no record of his school days has been preserved. In July 1796 he was entered as a fellow commoner of Trinity College, Cambridge, and went into residence in the October following. As he was destined for the Bar, he was entered at Lincoln's Inn on July 21, 1797, and proceeded to keep his law terms simultaneously with his college terms. William Lamb proceeded to his degree at the end of Trinity term, 1799, having spent his college days in private study rather than in following the easy curriculum which was then prescribed. He succeeded, nevertheless, in gaining a declamation prize by an oration 'On the Progressive Improvements of Mankind,' which Charles Fox, with great good-nature, went out of his way to praise in the House of Commons.

William Lamb in early manhood, as in after-life, was much addicted to poetical composition. He contributed to the *Bugle*, a weekly effusion of which the guests at Inverary Castle were the staff, and his friend Matthew—better known as 'Monk'—Lewis the editor. With the audacity of youth he plunged into political satire, and appeared as the author of an Epistle to the Editor of the *Anti-Jacobin*, published in the *Morning Chronicle* of January 17, 1798. The lines which were most quoted were at the expense of the unfortunate embassy to Lille: —

> 'I swear by all the youths that Malmesbury chose,
> By Ellis' sapient prominence of nose,
> By Morpeth's gait, important, proud, and big,
> By Leveson Gower's crop-imitating wig.'

But clever though the 'Epistle' was, Canning's guns soon silenced his young antagonist. The reply began :—

> 'Bard of the borrowed lyre! to whom belong
> The shreds and remnants of each hackney'd song:
> Thy verse thy friends in vain for wit explore,
> And count but one good line in eighty-four.'[1]

[1] The one good line was the fourth. 'Crop-imitating wig' means a wig of the colour of his hair, which was an innovation in those days. See Hay-

William Lamb evidently entertained to the full that sympathy for Napoleon which was freely and factiously expressed by Fox's followers at this time. The same spirit, too, is to be traced in his letters to his mother, when, according to the educational fashion among the great families, he and his brother Frederick repaired towards the end of 1799 to Glasgow, where, on the warm recommendation of Lord Lauderdale, they became resident pupils of Professor Millar, the author of a now forgotten 'Historical View of the English Government.' Frederick Lamb was not long in giving Lady Melbourne an animated description of their new surroundings:—

Hon. F. Lamb to Lady Melbourne. Wednesday.

THE only reason for not writing common occurrences is that none occur. We go regularly on in the same round, and William has given you an account of that round, so that I have nothing left but to repeat it again, in hopes he has left something out. If we tell any lies you may detect them by comparing accounts. There is nothing heard of in this house but study, though there is as much idleness, drunkenness, &c. out of it as in most universities. We breakfast at half-past nine, but I am roused by a stupid, slow, lumbering mathematician who tumbles me out of bed at eight. During the whole of the day we are seldom out of the house or the lecture-rooms for more than an hour, and after supper, which finishes a little after eleven, the reading generally continues till near two. Saturday and Sunday are holidays, but on Monday we have examinations in Millar's lectures. You may guess whether in this way many things are likely to happen. Millar himself is a little jolly dog, and the sharpest fellow I ever saw. All the ladies here are contaminated with an itch for philo-

ward's Essay on Lord Melbourne, reprinted from the *Quarterly Review*, No. 289, in his *Sketches of Eminent Statesmen and Writers* (1880).

sophy and learning, and such a set of fools it never was my lot to see. One of the Miss Millars is pretty, but they are all philosophers, and the eldest is exactly like Miss Trimmer. William quotes poetry to them all day, but I don't think he has made any impression yet, and my conversation with them is very little. One of the fellows in the house is a Scotchman, a blustering, positive sort of a fellow, but very good-humoured, and with a good deal of knowledge. The other is an Irishman, who is very good-humoured with none, and as like Lord Duncannon as he can stand. So there is a sketch of the family. We supped with Richardson a few nights ago, and a poking old booby he is.[1] Lord Lauderdale arrived in Edinburgh some days ago; we were to have gone over to him at the Christmas holidays, but as there are none he has written to desire us to attend upon him at Easter, when there are two or three days without any lectures. I used to think the English climate must be the worst in the whole world, but it was before I had been in Scotland; there is but little frost here, but rain never ceasing, and the whole family keep up such an unremitting coughing as can be heard nowhere else. Give my duty to my father. Thank George for his copy of verses; they are very good ones, and I don't believe there is anybody in Glasgow could write such, for there are no poets here.

I have just got the *Morning Post*; it mentions the report of Dundas's going out. You will hear everything from Huskisson, so when you write pray give some account of it, and what the Admiral says about it.[2]

[1] Evidently the merchant mentioned in the next letter.

[2] Mr. Huskisson, the well-known statesman, had married a daughter of Admiral Milbanke, Lady Melbourne's uncle, in 1799.

Hon. William Lamb to Lady Melbourne. Sunday, January 6, 1800.

THANK you for your account of Kinnaird.[1] Did he say nothing of having heard from me, nor of any intention of writing to me? I did not lay much stress upon Lewis's[2] authority, as his head is always full of one vagary or another, but I was rather more alarmed upon hearing that he had been with him, as he is certainly enough to drive [distracted] any person of strong nerves and in sound health, much more a valetudinarian enfeebled by fever. Is he staying in town? I hope you will contrive this winter to rub off a few rum ideas which he contracted in these philosophical colleges, and to divest him of rather too minute and scrupulous a morality, which is entirely unfit for this age. I suppose they did this for him a little at Edinburgh last year, but, however, I daresay some work is still left for London. For the company and manners of this place, I do not see much difference in them from the company and manners of any country town. I have dined out in a family way at a wealthy merchant's, and we have had several parties at home. We drink healths at dinner, hand round the cake at tea, and put our spoons into our cups when we desire to have no more, but exactly in the same manner as we used to behave at Hatfield, at Eton, and at Cambridge. Almost the only exclusive custom I have remarked is a devilish good one, which ought to be adopted everywhere. After the cheese they hand round the table a bottle of whisky and another of brandy, and the whole company, male and

[1] This is Byron's friend Charles, eighth Baron Kinnaird, who was born in 1780 and died in 1826.

[2] Matthew Gregory Lewis, the well-known author of *The Monk, The Castle Spectre, Tales of Terror*, and other novels and plays. He was a great friend of William Lamb, and, dying in 1818, left him a valuable library.

female in general, indulge in a dram. This is very comfortable and very exhilarating, and affords an opportunity for many jokes. As to language, they talk infinitely better English here than at Newcastle, and are much more easily understood. The town is a damnable one, and the dirtiest I ever saw, and full of all the inconveniences that accompany manufactures. I have received the works of the Divine Plato and the Greek Grammar with great thankfulness, though Xenophon would be of more use to me. You may safely tell Mrs. Russell that I never went to see the iron bridge. I tried to lie as perdue at Newcastle as possible, but find by this that I have not succeeded.

We have odd reports about Dundas here too. He has seen nobody since he has been at Edinburgh, and when the magistrates waited upon him in form they were refused admittance. The whispered rumour is that he is mad. Lunacy is the distemper which common fame seems always to give our Ministers (justly enough) when they keep themselves up. I remember they said so of Pitt a year ago. The time may not be very far off when they may be devilishly glad to be able to plead it. Everything wears a hostile appearance again. If the enthusiasm of the French can be roused for one more effort they will gain their point. My uncle must be very angry at the surrender of Coni, but St. Cyr's victory will put him into spirits again.[1] You never tell me how he does. I am afraid this weather with its sudden changes is unfavourable to him.

I have also received the Précis. What do people think in general of Godwin's novel?[2] I have only

[1] St. Cyr won a victory over the Austrians at Albano on December 14 and so retrieved the surrender of Coni on the 6th.

[2] Godwin's novel *St. Leon* was published in 1799.

read the first, and best part of the second volume, and it strikes me as being a work of very clumsy construction and very dull execution. The first volume is a complete story of itself. He appears to have run into the very extreme opposite to his former opinions. In his earlier works, particularly in his 'Political Justice,' he has gone so far as to say that no man is bound to keep a promise. He makes all St. Leon's, or the greatest part of St. Leon's, misery arise from the necessity he thinks himself under of keeping a promise which it would do nobody any harm to break. I mean the promise of secrecy to the man who gives him the Philosopher's Stone. Nobody but a fool would think himself bound to keep such a promise at such an expense. There is not even an attempt at novelty of character, and the pages are filled out with the idlest and oldest declamation. Besides, who but a fool would not perceive that the whole interest of the book is taken away by the Preface, in which he informs us that he is in possession of the Philosopher's Stone, and that he is not happy with it. It is no use to read any farther. This lets us into the whole purport of the book. What a miserable want of taste, too, to call his heroine Pandora. Everyone must see and think of her box of evils, of which this book is not the least. These are all palpable, gross, puerile blunders. If Lewis would but give his own abilities fair play he could write a novel fifty times as good.

I see the 'Passage of the St. Gothard' has found its way into the newspapers, and from the correctness of the text and length of the notes I suppose by design of the author.[1] I like it much better than I did when

[1] Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, the admirer of Dr. Johnson and the devoted adherent of Charles Fox. The poem is to be found in the

I saw it in manuscript, though some of the stanzas might easily be made better with slight alteration. The great fault is, that a poem inscribed to her children should begin with an address to Italy. She ought in justice to her children to have given them one or two stanzas more, for now they are tagged on to the tail of a poem in which they seem to have no business.

A Scotch lady (not a Miss Millar, but a Miss Malcolm, or some such name) asked me, first, if I knew the Duchess of D., and, secondly, if she played well upon the harpsichord. To which I knew not what to reply, so I believe I passed for an impostor.

I have received Dr. Langford's treatise on the Sacrament, and have written to praise it and thank him for it.[1]

The same to the same. Tuesday, January 14.

I GAVE my whole wrath vent yesterday in a long letter to Adair,[2] so that you will have my more cool and deliberate view of the subject. Ministers, I take it, were put into a great dilemma by the proposal of Bonaparte.[3] On the other hand, the letter was temperate and respectful in the highest degree, no shadow of insult or even of boasting. No conditions were proposed which could be seized upon as a pretext

Morning Post of December 21, 1799. It gave rise to Coleridge's ode with the refrain—

'Oh lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure,
Whence learned you that heroic measure?'

To which the answer was—From the children, to whom William Lamb takes such strong exception.

[1] *A Short Treatise on the Requisites for Confirmation; with an Introductory Dissertation on the Sacrament.* By William Langford. 1799.

[2] Sir Robert Adair, the diplomatist and last survivor of Fox's friends, who died in 1855.

[3] The First Consul's letter to the King (December 25, 1799).

for so abruptly refusing to treat. How could they answer to the people for this peremptory, unexplained rejection of all negotiation? On the other hand, they have, I suppose, entered into strict connections, certainly with Russia, and perhaps with Austria, by whose means they certainly expect to restore the monarchy. These connections depend but on a hazard; any suspicion of their sincerity would break them off immediately. If they had once negotiated, the coalition would most probably have been dissolved. Everyone would have thought of shifting for himself. This I should guess to be the danger, the fear of which has forced them upon the desperate measure they have taken—a measure which appears of such moment that, if I did not know that one always exaggerates the events of the day, I should think it must either lead them to the scaffold, or make them the perpetual, absolute tyrants of this country. If the people are so blind to future, and, what is more extraordinary, so callous to present misery as to permit our rulers, notwithstanding this fair and generous overture, to persevere in the present contest, they must consider them as pledging their reputations and their lives upon the success of it. If they do succeed, they will be lords of the earth, and we must wait in patience for the slow progress of opinion, knowledge, and truth. If they fail, I cannot but think that everything will turn out according to our wishes. This is a terrible crisis. I tremble for France, even though her whole military force is at the disposal of Bonaparte. As to Lord Grenville's letter, it has been admirably exposed in most of the opposition prints, particularly in the *Morning Post.*[1]

[1] Lord Grenville, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, answered the letter on January 4. The *Morning Post* of January 7 considered his

Its low scurrility and its weak reasoning are too obvious to escape the most bungling observer. The whole transaction leaves the odium of the war entirely upon us, and Bonaparte laid a snare for us with the utmost art, which we could not possibly escape. We have broken through the meshes in the most awkward and clumsy manner. If anything can produce any sensation on this panic-struck, prejudiced British people, this desperate measure, together with the hardness of the season, the dearness of corn, and the distress of trade, seem calamities severe enough to excite in their minds a little inquiry into the causes and reasons and necessity for them. I am very eager to hear as far as I can somewhat of the general reception of the determination of Government. The Aristocrats here are said to grumble, but they are most of them manufacturers, and there is no reliance to be placed upon their discontent. If they should become really alarmed and displeased the system goes to pieces that moment; but they will bear more taxes yet. Ministers, by your account, boast of what must appear to every man who feels any *impartial* sense of honour the meanest and basest of artifices—I mean the smuggling of a proclamation to the Royalists into France, under form of an answer to the Consul's letter. The transaction upon the whole is such that, if it is not followed up by the most decisive success, it must tell very heavily against the authors of it. We have a report of another revolution at Naples, but the news is too good to be true.[1] The Democrats

note 'disorderly in its arrangement, vague and indefinite in its expressions, and barbarous in its style; worthy of Ministers, but not worthy of their country.'

[1] It was not true, as the sanguinary punishment of the insurgents, which Nelson is unjustly supposed to have inaugurated, was still in full swing.

here, who at first were angry at Bonaparte and the new French constitution, consider his measures now as necessary for the great temporary effort which France has to make. We are sanguine enough to expect from it the downfall of the House of Austria and the establishment of a free government in Germany. I am rather more fearful. I wish the French may be able to defend themselves from their enemies abroad and at home.

Mr. Fox might certainly come forward now with great propriety, and without subjecting himself to the charge of inconsistency, because he would stand with more strength and firmness than ever, though that is almost impossible, upon his old ground of advising negotiation. But I cannot help thinking that, though his speaking might and most probably would have a great effect, his silence would have a greater.[1] While there is an Opposition in the House of Commons, the people think that their rights are taken care of, and go to sleep. When there is none, they feel themselves more in the hands of Ministry (not that they really are more so), and begin to watch for themselves. A little indignation may be excited, and, perhaps, a few addresses procured by their speeches, but nothing radical can be done. The King will maintain at all hazards the Ministry; they themselves are too old in their trade to be frightened by petitions or mobs; Parliament is composed of their bondsmen; the majority of electors throughout the country are either bought or frightened. This I take not to be an exaggeration of their strength. What is to move this weighty fabric, built upon influence, power, and interest, defended as it is by an immense military force? If they *hold together*, and resolve to stand out to the last, it is impossible to

[1] Fox had retired from Parliament in 1797.

conceal from oneself that nothing can overthrow them but the greatest and most important event, such as the failure of the funds, or the rising of the mass of the people. So much for the present. Millar has come to ask me to walk with him. We are very well.

The same to the same; undated.

I RECEIVED your letter and the pamphlet both together yesterday. I have been drudging through the latter as well as I can with a dictionary. It appears evidently to be written, as Ministers say, by an instrument of Sieyès, but it is written with a force of argument and truth which an instrument of Pitt's dares not meet, and cannot refute.[1] Indeed, the case is so clear, the offers of France are so plain and decided, and our rejection so mean and shuffling, that no evasion, no subterfuge is left for those aristocrats who have hitherto professed that their only aim was to repress the hostile intentions of France. Those intentions are publicly disavowed. If they pretend to say that they are not really renounced, why do they not infer that the Emperor of Russia is at bottom a Jacobin, or anything else? The war may still be persisted in by Lord Fitzwilliam and Mr. Windham upon their principles, but as to the rest they have not a single argument left to rest upon. Bonaparte's second letter must perplex them exceedingly. We had an imperfect account of the contents in the *Star* of last night. It appears to be written with remarkable clearness and acuteness. The mention of the House of Stuart is admirable, because it is just.[2] The whole transaction

[1] Evidently some pamphlet in defence of the First Consul's letter. It was apparently mentioned by Ministers in the debate on the Address, but the allusion is not to be found in the reports of their speeches, published in the *Parliamentary History*.

[2] 'The First Consul of the French Republic could not doubt that his

sets the abilities of Bonaparte and his advisers in the highest point of view. Every line he writes carries with it an air of greatness and sincerity. Every line we return appears written only to mislead and to deceive. As to Mr. Fox, I think the way in which he would act with the greatest propriety and dignity and utility is very clear. If the present events cause a great sensation in the country, his constituents will surely desire him to go down to Parliament. If they do not call upon him, it must be concluded that they do not want him. If I were he, I would come forward with the support and concurrence of the country, or not at all. I do not know whether the best thing he could do would not be to give up his seat at this moment. Is any one member of the House of Commons prepared to own that he has been in the wrong, and vote with him? Are the people ready decisively to declare their approbation of his conduct? Temporising measures are what we have more particularly to dread. Unless there is a general and radical change of opinion, which is not to be expected, it is vain to trust to the cowardly dissatisfaction arising from defeat and temporary hardship. A naval victory, the capture of a few useless ships, would at this moment drive the whole nation mad, and make them expect to be masters of Paris in a fortnight. Nothing can be hoped for but from repeated disappointment and the severest suffering; and what selfish, brutish motives are these? We have certainly been for a long time, for freedom of thought and opinion, for public spirit and toleration, the first nation in Europe. We have now

Britannic Majesty recognised the right of nations to choose the form of their government, since it is from the exercise of this right that he holds his crown.'—Talleyrand's Letter to Lord Grenville of the 20th Nivôse (January 14).

certainly lost our superiority, and there is every reason to fear that we shall never regain it. We shall shortly be the last. We are fixed in bigotry and prejudice. We think there is no liberty but our liberty, no government but our government, and no religion but our religion. Some time ago, perhaps, we were right in thinking so, but we have reasons enough before our eyes at present to induce us to alter our opinion.

You have had Lewis and Kinnaird both at Brocket. I hear nothing but praises of the latter here. As for the former, he might be pleasant enough if he was not always upon the strain. I think, now that the heat of anger and dissatisfaction has passed away, I could draw a good character of him. I hear he intends proposing to Emily Stratford. I think she will keep him in tolerably warm water for the rest of his life. She will make him shed more tears and look more doleful in assembly-rooms than ever I did. It would not be a bad speculation for her to marry him, for she may get him killed off in a duel as soon as she pleases. Brunel can easily ascertain whether my letter was opened or not, as it was closed both with a wafer and with sealing-wax.[1] I have no seal, and the impression on the wax was some marks made with a pen or a pair of scissors, or something of that kind. Probably the address and the seal together made him think it the handiwork of some clerk of the Post Office. If so, it is only imputable to me; the bad folding of the letter, too, is an internal evidence of my hand. Holliday is such a goose that he may be allowed to think anything, but Lord C. ought not, by rights, to be so foolish. Poor

[1] This may, perhaps, be Sir Marc Brunel. But it is not easy to see how the two could have become acquainted, unless it was through Lord Spencer, to whom Brunel had submitted an invention.

Andover! if the shot were to hit anybody they might certainly have been better directed.[1] It has put me in mind to send you some unfinished stanzas, which are, I think, the best I ever wrote. The last four particularly are, I believe, original, or rather originally turned. Many of the lines are bad, and must be altered, therefore do not show them much, nor give any copies. Adair ought to see them to make up for 'Barine.'[2]

The same to the same. February 8.

I BELIEVE I have not thanked you yet for 'No. 84: a Tale of the Nineteenth Century' (by-the-bye, it is only the eighteenth, but no matter for that); the story is excellent, and wants only the introduction of the Duke and Prince W. of Gloucester, who, I am afraid, did not make their appearance that evening, as I see no mention of them in the poem.[3] Some of the stanzas are rather rough and harsh, but the story is so good that it does not want any foreign aid or ornament. As to my own verses, you do not seem to give me any credit for novelty of thought, but it appears to me that the manner in which we go dancing on through life, without seeming to think about an event which may happen every instant, and at the same time entirely unknowing of what will become of us when it does happen, is a very curious circumstance, which, though it may have been hinted at, has never been poetically dilated and set in a full point of view before. The stanzas which Brand[4] is thinking of are not cut out,

[1] Lord Andover was killed through a gun accident near Holkham, on January 10. The Holliday mentioned may possibly be the author of the *Life of Lord Mansfield*.

[2] Possibly a previous production of William Lamb's.

[3] Evidently a poem in some magazine or keepsake.

[4] Mr. Brand was afterwards to move a hostile resolution, on the formation of Mr. Perceval's Cabinet, which was seconded by William Lamb.

but not yet quite fitted in. They are to follow almost immediately after those which you have. As to 'disturbed,' it must be read in three syllables, dis-tur-bed.' I believe this usage is too old and too exploded by our more modern poets to be borne now, but I have rather a partiality for it myself, as the contraction of it into 'disturb'd' augments the number of those great blemishes of our language, consonants accumulated at the end of words. I question whether a knowledge of music can be said to assist poetry—that is, whether a completely correct and perfect ear for the latter may not be acquired without any of the former. Lewis is certainly a case in point; his ear is extremely exact, and his stanzas (not his heroic verses) have a very peculiarly beautiful glow. It must be remarked, however, that prose writing requires as correct an ear at least as poetry, for it is certainly more various. The reason that Lewis has not this in the same perfection is that he has read less prose, and has accustomed himself less to consider the cadences of periods. The same reason may be given for the mediocre rhythm of his ten-syllable verses; it is all habit and exercise.

I have read the Letters, and am not very indignant.[1] The calumny is too unskilful, atrocious as it is, to move me much. When they say that Bonaparte is an ignorant man, and a bad general, one can only smile, and ask them if they are quite easy about the next cam-

[1] *Copies of Original Letters from the Army of General Bonaparte.* These letters were intercepted by the Turkish and English ships of war, and published in two parts (1798 and 1799) with anonymous prefaces. It is the first part, containing descriptions of the plight of the French army in Egypt, to which William Lamb alludes. Jaubert was killed in the explosion on board the *Orient* at the battle of the Nile. There is certainly nothing in his letter, printed at page 36 of the *Letters*, to account for his being styled in a footnote 'a villain upon principle' (not 'the execrable').

paign. It is not quite so easy to restrain wrath when, without assigning any reason, they stigmatise in the most savage manner an officer who died gallantly for his country. Will you just ask, if you can safely, for what concealed reason they call General Jaubert 'the execrable'? I do not quite understand their praise of Kléber, but I suppose, since his late success, it is turned into abuse. The violence of the publication rather outdoes itself, for there are very few persons who do not think the Letters, as well as the Preface, compositions of Canning's. I sometimes almost get knocked down for pretending to affirm that I do not think Ministry quite such paltry rogues as to have forged them. It is impossible to determine whether the Preface is Canning's, or Gifford's, or some one else's of the same set, for the like hitch and catch of monotonous wit runs through them all—poets, secretaries, parsons, and nobles, from the top to the bottom, from Frere to Boringdon.[1] Whoever the author may be signifies little. The only doubt is whether he be a more degraded fool, or a more infamous calumniator. I daresay Lord Egremont[2] is right enough about the disputatious disposition of those men who have been so unfortunate as to have been at Millar's. But this I take to be the case throughout the whole university as much as at Millar's, and at Edinburgh still more than here. No place can be perfect; and the truth is, that the Scotch universities are very much calculated to make a man vain, important, and

[1] Gifford is, of course, the author of the *Baviad* and *Mæviad*, and editor of the *Anti-Jacobin* and *Quarterly*; Hookham Frere, one of the wittiest of the contributors to the *Anti-Jacobin*, and subsequently Minister at Madrid. Lord Boringdon, a college friend of Canning's, was afterwards created Earl of Morley, and died in 1840.

[2] The well-known patron of art who is mentioned in the biographies of all the great painters. He died at Petworth in 1837.

pedantic. This is naturally the case where there is a great deal of reading. You cannot have both the advantages of study and of the world together. The way is to let neither of them get too fast a hold of you, and this is done by nothing so well as by frequent changes of place, of persons, and of companions. We have two fellows in the house with us, who think themselves, each of them, as wise as Plato and Aristotle put together, and ask, with a supercilious sort of doubt, whether Pitt is really a good orator, or Fox has much political knowledge. This will all wear off in time; though, to be sure, one of them is three-and-twenty and has been in France since the Revolution, so that I am afraid he is incorrigible, which is a pity, as he is really a fellow of some abilities. The other is an Irishman, about my age, who knew nothing before he came here last year, and who, therefore, thinks that nobody knows anything anywhere else. He has tried to persuade me once or twice that Millar is the only person in Great Britain who is engaged in philosophical speculation; and I believe he sets me down for an obstinate blockhead because I do not believe him. The debates in the House of Lords did not make a great show in the newspaper, and Carlisle, Romney, and Carnarvon seemed to have made sneaking half-and-half sort of speeches. There was nothing so strong in print as the words of Lord Carnarvon which you have written to me. I am very sorry that they have come forward at all, and shall be, whatever speech Fox may have made in the House of Commons. Their sentiments were well enough known; nobody could doubt but that they would come forward whenever there was any chance of success; but they have by this time shown an eagerness to take advantage of any circumstance

that might afford them a hope; they have anticipated and prevented the wishes of the nation; they have done away entirely with the effect of their secession, and made it appear not the effect of disapprobation, but of disappointment. The Duke's speech, as given in the papers, is weak and querulous; Lord Holland's just nothing at all. Unless they can say something more plain and decisive they had better hold their tongues. A miserable division, too—five and a madman.[1] They will, of course, make a better figure in the House of Commons; but still they will be beat by a large majority, and that sanctions the measures of Ministry. If they had continued quite still, the effect would have been amazing. Altogether I am in terrible fear about politics. The coalition is formidable. If France stands her ground, however, all will do yet. I have written this letter at two or three different times during yesterday and the day before, but I delayed sending it till to-day, because Frederick has had a sore throat and fever, which is epidemical here (very slightly), and I would not mention it till I could tell you that he was quite well. Cleghorn has been very attentive to him, though he scarcely at any time had any need of him. Farewell; I am impatient to read Fox's speech, but must wait till Friday.

The same to the same. February 11.

I PASS over the melancholy information of your letter. Little or nothing can be said upon such a subject so judiciously and properly as

[1] The debate on the King's message respecting overtures of peace from the Consular Government, January 22, 1800. The minority was composed of the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Albemarle, Lords Ponsonby, Holland, King, and Camelford, of whom the last was apparently 'the madman.' See the letter of March 6.

not to appear rather like ostentation than concern. Every mind under such circumstances finds its own consolation, one in religion, another in philosophy, and by its own reflections softens and mitigates that sorrow which the officious attempts of others only irritate.

As to Lewis's business, Ben King is the person who told me it, and for whom I am afraid.[1] The affair was put into his uncle's (a lawyer's) hands, and I believe it is not usual for these things to be told until the declaration is made public. However, if Lewis does not know whence Kinnaird got the story, and does not think it worth his while to enquire—which most probably he does not—we are safe. I understand besides—but this must be ten times more secret if possible—that he is most likely to fail, as he has nothing to produce but assertions of verbal promises.

'Sappho' is still a subject of dispute, though the vehemence of it has a good deal decreased. Adair has sent me a long discussion of Parr's upon the subject, with a request that I will return it as soon as I have deciphered it.[2] You may tell him that I believe I shall keep it for ever, for both I and the Greek Professor have been labouring at it for this week past, and can scarcely make anything out of it. I was once a little staggered in my opinion about the ode, but I have recovered it again, and, I believe, shall hold it firmly. It is a pity we have not the whole of it, and likewise of Catullus's translation. Tell the Duke of Bedford that I will suspend judgment according to his desires, though the time for deliberation will be longer than I believe

[1] A brother of Lord King mentioned later on.

[2] Dr. Parr, the well-known scholar, was now living at Hatton, in Warwickshire. The badness of his handwriting was proverbial ('Life of Dr. Routh,' in Dean Burgon's *Lives of Twelve Good Men*).

even his prudence ever took. By-the-bye, how comes Lord Camelford loose again and voting in opposition? I wish you would send me Fox's and Grattan's speeches, both of which I see are published. What does Bertrand de Moleville say in his pamphlet?[1] How strange and enigmatical are politics of a sudden become! Were Ministers deceived about the intentions of Russia? By heavens, if there was a crisis in the affairs of the world, this is one!

Farewell! I am almost ashamed of sending so short a letter, but you will think it better than none. Frederick is very well, and gone at this moment (seven o'clock in the evening) to see Herman Boar, the juggler. Love to Emily. I have not forgot her letter, but will acknowledge it shortly. I have returned Martindale an answer in the negative. I will have nought to do with any club.

The same to the same. Thursday, March 6.

I HAVE two long letters of yours and several shorter ones, which I have not answered. I will try to write to you now, though I do not know whether I shall be able. I am a most capricious correspondent. Sometimes I like nothing so well as scribbling, and sometimes I cannot endure to hear my pen scratch against the paper. I am sorry to hear your account of Kinnaird, but I know it to be something like the truth, though a little exaggerated. Steadiness of opinion is necessary, but steadiness of conduct for a fellow who has plenty of money does not signify

[1] The Marquis Bertrand de Moleville, who had been Minister of Marine and afterwards of the Police under Louis XVI., fled to England, and there published in 1800 some *Annals of the French Revolution.* They were quoted by Fox in the House of Commons, and a correspondence arose.

much. I mean by conduct, whether he studies law or physic, whether he spends his time at Lincoln's Inn or in a German university. It is impossible, I think, that you can expect him to read the law steadily and to any great extent. You see that Brunel, who has a much stronger character, does not do it. I do not see any good in his going abroad with Mr. Grenville, any more than I do in his having a troop of Yeomanry; it is all too like compromise and complaisance and his father. I daresay that Young's letter was a very ridiculous one. His manner is odd, but he is a most admirable scholar, and I daresay an able man in other respects, though I do not know, for, as he is very cautious and guarded, I cannot talk politics very freely with him. I almost wonder that Fox took the trouble to answer Bertrand de Moleville; calling him a fool is noticing him too much. Fox's speech is certainly one of the finest compositions I ever read; exactly in the tone he ought to hold—highly contemptuous to the House, and at the same time perfectly within the bounds of propriety. Tierney, and more particularly Sheridan, are still too full of idle jargon about Jacobin principles. If you allow and admit any of those indefinite expressions of Ministers, you give up the whole of the question. The facility with which Pitt has raised the loan is very unfavourable; even though he may not have got it upon such good terms as he says, it will enable him to go through another campaign, and another very probably after that. I was in hopes that he would at least double the tax upon income. I have had a long letter from Ben King, written to prove that the loan is not obtained so well as is supposed; but I cannot understand his statements any better than Pitt's. Does any one pay any regard to Lord Stanhope? If his

promises are near being correct, Gib is a strong one.[1] What has made Lord Camelford, who was so eager to assassinate Barras, wheel about? He had better not attempt to go to France now. He will not find the King's pardon easy to be obtained. I understand that the first time he divided in the minority, it was so little expected that the Chancellor sent to him to assure him that he had made a mistake. He is a noble accession to the Opposition Lords, and I think he, Stanhope, King, and Holland may challenge Europe to produce equal oddities. We are very eager to hear news from the Continent. We expect a great blow early, and I think, upon the whole, do not much fear a campaign similar to the last. Suwarrow's victories were gained over Rewbell and Lepaux. Let him try his hand with Carnot and Bonaparte. I cannot help writing freely. Brand's apprehensions are nonsense; and besides, what if they were true?—it is unnecessary dissimulation to pretend to wish well to the arms of Russia and Austria. One must indeed affect to look a little grave upon the failure of an expedition to Holland. I suppose we are certainly to send another next autumn, after having talked about it all the spring and summer. Considering the great advantages which, according to Dundas, we derived from it, it would certainly be unpardonable in the Ministry not to repeat so beneficial a scheme. Almost Bonaparte's first appearance was at the head of one of the columns that marched upon Toulon. By-the-bye, are there no more of the Précis come out? Grattan's speech is, I think, not a very excellent one. The Union is, I suppose, by this time carried, through

[1] Lord Stanhope, on February 20, moved for an address to enter into negotiations for peace with France; but the published versions of his speech contain no mention of Gibraltar.

thick and thin. Upon my soul, the impudence and audacity of Ministers would in a better cause be termed courage and perseverance. I will answer Emily's letter soon. We have received a letter from George. I do not enquire about my uncle. I expect to hear from him too soon.

The same to the same. Thursday, March 27.

I HAVE this moment received your note and Holliday's paper, which put me in mind that I have not answered the long letter I received from you the day before yesterday. I was in despair upon hearing of the intention of the French to evacuate Egypt. I was in hopes that they would have been able to have maintained themselves there in spite of Canning's wit and Sir Sydney's valour.[1] But, however, all cannot, or at least does not, turn out as one wishes. Are the remarks upon the Preface to the intercepted correspondence certainly Tierney's? I suppose you know by this time. I think they are in what I should guess to be his style. They are well enough and, as you say, made in a very proper and judicious spirit, but they are very plain and obvious, and such as every man of common sense must make in his own mind. They add nothing to what one had thought before. Moore's book is but just worth reading. He writes worse and worse every publication, but still he writes better than the majority of novelists.[2] Keep the French novels till I come to town. I think Mercier is worth your looking at.[3] I lose about as much of the spirit o

[1] It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that the allusion is to Sir Sydney Smith's defence of Acre.

[2] This novelist, Robert Moore, M.D., is now almost forgotten. His most successful novel, *Zeluco*, was published in 1789; the book in question *Mordaunt*, which had just appeared, was by no means so popular.

[3] Louis Sébastien Mercier, French man of letters, born in 1740, die

a play in French as I do of a German one in an English translation—at least, I suppose so—and, judging in this manner, I think him infinitely superior to Kotzebue. He is sometimes ludicrous and overstrained, but he is never so extravagant, and he is full as much master of nature and feeling. I speak only of two plays, which are all that I have read; these are 'Le Juge' and 'Jean Hennuyer.' I shall read another or two whenever I have time.

I believe I have now finished all the literature I had to mention, and shall proceed to the observations upon men, manners, &c. Nothing is so essential as clear arrangement. Kinnaird's want of tact, as you call it, or of propriety, as I think it may be termed, is a disease which I begin to consider as incurable. It must, therefore, be borne with. His consequence, which he always had, but which he greatly increased in Scotland, and his pompous profession of purity of morals, if they do not get better soon, must, I am afraid, be also considered as incurable. Everybody has foibles, from which, as Pitt says of Jacobinism, no quarantine can purify him, and these are his. No resource remains but to make up your mind to put up with them, or to have nothing more to do with the possessor of them. As to Lewis's way of laughing people out of them—which, by the way, you are sometimes a little inclined to adopt—it only confirms them, and makes the person ridiculed hate you into the bargain. Lord Egremont is very good, and not the less so because he is in some measure right. You did not tell him, I suppose, that I

in 1814. His plays, which were genuine attempts to break through the classical traditions of the French stage, were published in four volumes (1778–1784). He also wrote a *Tableau de Paris*, a prolix and moralising description of the French capital, in twelve volumes.

say so. I have found out the persons whom he has known who have been here. They are little Kingsman—whom, I believe, you do not know—a Scotch, chattering, riotous fellow with very considerable acuteness and ability, and Mr. Thomas, son of Sir George Thomas, a dull, heavy, drawling fellow. At least, so he was when he was here, and so he was thought all the time he was here, but I suppose Egremont found him fluent enough at his return. I wish you would get acquainted with Lord King and Parnell, that you may let me know how they are going on.[1] I am afraid they are half mad, and only eager to overthrow the Church and put up the Dissenters. This last sentence brings me very naturally to the sermon, which so exactly hits Lewis's taste both in argument and eloquence. I confess it meets mine in neither.[2] The first is founded upon false statements of former facts, upon random assertion of the present, and upon idle prophecies for the future. The latter is certainly vigorous in some places, but it is not excellent enough to be entitled to any consideration at a period when almost everybody can write with sufficient spirit and accuracy. Composition has become a mechanical art, which almost every person can obtain. It is difficult to find something good and just and new to say, but it is by no means difficult to find words in which to say it. What I particularly reprobate in this sermon, and what will be

[1] Peter, seventh Lord King, had just made his maiden speech. He was the author of the *Life of John Locke*, and died in 1833. Sir Henry Parnell, afterwards Lord Congleton, was subsequently to distinguish himself as a writer on the currency, and as Paymaster-General in Lord Melbourne's second Ministry. Both he and Lord King were in residence at Trinity about the same time as William Lamb.

[2] This was a sermon preached by Robert Hall, the great Baptist divine, on 'Modern Infidelity with respect to its influence on Society' (1800). It has been constantly republished.

found in all writings of this nature, is the indiscriminate abuse of all who have thought against them. They take the faults and crimes of any one man, and apply them liberally to the whole sect. Because Bolingbroke was a debauched man, they say all atheists are debauched; because Rousseau was a madman, they say all atheists are mad; because Mirabeau was a rogue, they say all atheists are rogues. This is a way of argument entirely nonsensical, and completely refuted by facts, yet you will find it insisted upon throughout the whole of the sermon. Look to page 35—'When we consider the character of the atheistical sect'; and to page 65—'The features which compose the characters of apostates,' &c. Another point which all priests of the present day, and, indeed, of every other day, insist upon with equal presumption and absurdity is the ignorance of their opponents. *Vide* the Preface to the Sermon, page iv.—'The most luminous statements of the evidences of Christianity,' &c. However, read it through. I do not think you can find one argument of the absurdity of which I cannot, I will not say convince you, for that is a bold word, but of the validity of which I cannot make you doubt. I do not like the Dissenters, and this Hall is one. They are more zealous, and consequently more intolerant, than the Established Church. Their only object is power. If we are to have a prevailing religion, let us have one that is cool and indifferent, and such a one as we have got. Not that I am so foolish as to dread any fires and faggots and wheels and axes, but there are other modes of persecution. Toleration is the only good and just principle, and toleration for every opinion that can possibly be formed. Adieu! This is a letter of criticism and observation. I will write again soon about Willie and all that.

The same to the same. April 4.

We have to-day drawn a draft upon Messrs. Snow & Co., payable twenty days after date, for 20*l.* As we had only about five days vacation, and had omitted to write to you about it before, we could not wait for a letter from you. We are just returned from Lanark, where we went to see the Falls of Clyde, which are very grand and very beautiful, but rather more the latter, and we set off to-morrow for Loch Lomond. I do not think that the glassy bosom of the Leven Water and the craggy summit of Ben Lomond are objects fitted to produce the tender and the amorous. However, I will try, and if my thoughts produce anything I will communicate. By-the-bye, Frederick has the impudence to say that he does not know *now* but what Robinson's Epic Poem may end in a Hymeneal Song.[1] Farewell! I am afraid a letter will arrive from you to-morrow, which we shall not get till Monday. We are in terrible dumps about Egypt and Malta. Nothing but a good blow on the Continent can revive us.

After his departure from Glasgow William Lamb proceeded to read for the Bar. He seems to have applied himself to his studies with some assiduity, and monuments of his industry remain in the shape of a note-book on law lectures, with the inscription 'Assumpsit,' and another full of legal definitions arranged alphabetically. At the same time it is probable that the society of Melbourne House and Carlton House occupied the greater part of his time, and he had by no means altogether relinquished poetry. We find him, for instance, writing an epilogue on 'The Advantages of Peace' for Miss Berry's

[1] This may not impossibly be the statesman who, as Viscount Goderich, was Prime Minister after Canning's death (1827–28), and Colonial Secretary and Lord Privy Seal under Sir Robert Peel. But he was not married until several years afterwards. He obtained the Browne medal at Cambridge in 1801 for a Latin ode on 'The Capture of Malta,' which may be the epic in question.

'Fashionable Friends' when it was played at Drury Lane in May 1802.[1] The poem is hardly above mediocrity, and the piece itself was withdrawn after the third night.

Mr. Lamb was called to the Bar in Michaelmas Term 1804, and went the Northern Circuit. At the Lancashire Sessions he received a complimentary brief through the influence of Scarlett, afterwards Lord Abinger. He used to say that the first sight of his name on the back gave him the highest feeling of satisfaction he ever experienced, very far transcending his enjoyment on being appointed Prime Minister. But while he was preparing for his profession—and his work at the Home Office proves that he would have made an excellent lawyer—his elder brother, Peniston, died, and the course of his life was changed. In the following year he was returned for Leominster, and on June 3 he married Lady Caroline Ponsonby, only daughter of the Earl of Bessborough. Lord Minto dined at Roehampton with Lord Bessborough on August 23, and records that 'We had two of the Mr. Lambs there, the eldest of whom, having been the second brother, was intended for the law; he seemed to be a remarkably pleasant, clever, and well-informed young man; he is now the eldest son. The other, George, seems merely a good-natured lad.'

[1] Miss Berry's *Journal*, ii. 196.

CHAPTER II

FIRST YEARS IN PARLIAMENT

1805–1812

WILLIAM LAMB had not been long in Parliament before the death of Mr. Pitt, on January 23, 1806, placed his friends in power. The Opposition, under the leadership of Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, and reinforced by the friends of Lord Sidmouth, assumed office, and that shortlived administration was formed which is known as that of 'All the Talents.' But the breakdown of the negotiations for peace with France, followed by the death of Fox—on whose bust Lamb wrote some lines full of feeling—radically altered their position. Parliament met again on December 19, and Mr. Lamb made his maiden speech as mover of the Address in reply to the King's Speech. In the following March, on the day before the King dismissed the Ministry because of their refusal to pledge themselves never to reopen the Catholic question, he began to write a diary, which he kept up with more or less of regularity during the two following years:—

Wednesday, March 18, 1807.—The third reading of the Solicitor-General's (Sir S. Romilly's) Bill for making the freehold estates of persons dying insolvent assets for the payment of their simple contract debts. The landed interest were much alarmed, and all the old topics of the danger of innovation, the value of country gentlemen, the sanctity of family settlements, the antiquity of the present law, were very strongly insisted upon. The Master of the Rolls (Sir W. Grant) opposed the Bill in a very long speech peculiarly calculated to raise doubt and apprehension, and, like all his speeches that I have ever heard, distinguished by the greatest appearance of

clearness and perspicuity. His statements are plain, his deductions fine, but at the same time with a show of soundness. While he is speaking you think that he is completely laying open the depths of the subject; but when he has finished, and the mind comes to consider what he has said, it finds that none of his inferences can be brought to bear fairly and satisfactorily upon the point, and that all his powers of reasoning have only served more effectually to perplex and embarrass the question. The Solicitor-General made, in my opinion, a most clear and satisfactory reply, as it certainly was not difficult for him to do. I entered the House with the fullest intention of speaking, and, as I thought, having sufficiently considered the subject. Many excellent opportunities offered themselves, but my resolution always failed me, which I have bitterly regretted ever since. The Bill was rejected—sixty-nine to forty-seven—the majority having in it many landed proprietors, either in possession or expectancy; a most disgraceful division, and one which really hurt and mortified me deeply, as I could see no plausible argument *ab inconvenienti*, of which nature all the arguments urged against the Bill were, and if there had been strong arguments of that nature urged, I never can think that they ought to prevail against the glaring injustice of the law as it at present stands.

Previous to this debate Lord Howick[1] stated that he should not move the second reading of the Bill enabling his Majesty to grant commissions in the army to dissenters from the Established Church, which stood for to-morrow; the consequence of which, he said, would

[1] Lord Howick is, of course, the Reform Premier, *Earl Grey*. On the death of Fox he became Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons.

be that the order would drop, and he had nothing to say at present respecting the intention of renewing it. It is generally understood that the present Administration are to be removed as soon as their successors can be fixed upon. The Duke of Portland is to be the head of the new Ministry. . . .

Saturday, April 25.—Having omitted to note down daily the events which have occurred during the last month, I must try to bring them up to the present day as well as I can from recollection, although in this manner the great use, or rather the particular amusing character of a journal, which arises from its preserving the more minute and fugitive occurrences, and the immediate impressions produced upon the mind by transactions at the time of their taking place, is almost entirely lost.

Here follows a long and very clear account of the well-known circumstances attending the resignation of Lord Grenville's Ministry.

I must here remark upon the facts above stated, which are admitted on all hands to be correct, that even if we admit that up to the period of the despatches from Ireland containing the proceedings with the Catholic deputies at Dublin the King was not aware of the extent to which the Catholic disabilities were intended to be removed—which in candour must be admitted, since Lord Sidmouth (as he says), and Lord Howick himself, certainly, were not aware of it—even if we admit, as we are further called to do, that after Lord Howick's despatch of March 2, written expressly for the purpose of calling his attention to it, he still, in consequence of unusual inadvertence, misunderstood the nature of the measure; if we make both these ad-

missions; the last of which I cannot but consider is a very large one, if we recollect how alive and awake his attention according to all accounts is to everything connected with this subject, it is still as impossible for me to believe that in the conversation with Lord Howick on March 4 he did clearly express his decided disapprobation of that measure, and if he did not, it is more impossible for me to believe that he intended to do so. That he expressed a general dislike and disapprobation, Lord Howick says himself; but that he expressed it in such a manner as he afterwards stated himself to Lord Grenville to have done—namely, in a manner calculated to impress on Lord Howick's mind that he had withdrawn the consent which he had only given under a mistake, and that he never could be induced to concur in the measure as it stood—is in my opinion rendered highly improbable, not only by the readiness with which Lord Howick apprehends the meaning of what is addressed to him, but more particularly by the clearness with which his Majesty is known, when he chooses, to express himself. The short history of the matter is, that he was determined upon the first opportunity to get rid of an Administration which acted upon principles and maxims which it has been the study of his reign to counteract and destroy. He had not, however, at the time of his conversation with Lord Howick on March 4 determined upon taking the step of dismissing them; by Wednesday, March 11, he was prepared to take that step, and on that day he declared to Lord Grenville his determination to resist the Bill, expecting that Lord Grenville would persevere, and upon that ground resign. In this hope he was disappointed by the Ministers determining to give up the Bill; but still the resolution to get rid of them was

formed, and the opportunity arising from the reservation with which they properly and necessarily accompanied this consent to abandon the Bill was eagerly seized to make upon them a demand with which no man of any party whatsoever has yet said that, consistently with their duty, they could have complied.

On Thursday, April 9, Mr. Brand moved a resolution in the House of Commons to the effect that it would be highly criminal in any Counsellors of his Majesty to fetter their own discretionary power of offering advice to the Crown by any stipulation or engagement whatsoever, and I seconded the motion. . . . The debate, as far as I recollect, went on very well until Mr. Grattan led the House away from the subject immediately brought under its consideration by making not a very good speech almost entirely upon the Catholic question and the state of Ireland. This roused Dr. Duigenan,[1] who immediately uttered one of his dull, heavy attempts at a philippic against the Catholics. What most distinguished the debate upon the whole was the speech of Mr. Plunket, the late Attorney-General for Ireland, which was at once clear, powerful, moderate and eloquent, delivered in a modest and impressive manner, and distinguished by some forcible appeals arising from the circumstances of the moment. . . . Perceval replied to Plunket, but very faintly and not with half the spirit which he used to exhibit on the other side of the House.[2] Sir S. Romilly, I think, followed him, and soon after Lord Howick, who seemed, as well as Perceval, to have lost both spirit and force by the change in his situation, although such a change as he has experienced has

[1] Dr. Duigenan was champion of the Orange interest in the House.

[2] Mr. Perceval was Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons.

generally been found to produce a different effect. Mr. Canning made a speech of some ability, but pettish, querulous, and little, beyond his usual pettishness, querulousness, and littleness. The House being clamorous for the question when he rose, he began by saying that it was their duty to hear him; he held all the unjustifiable language the use of which was, as far as I know, introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. Pitt, saying that, though there might be a majority against him, he should still retain his situation, and thus defying and setting at nought the constitutional power of the House of Commons with the most evident arrogance, entirely unsupported by any dignity. He concluded his speech, which had been throughout founded upon the notion that by the present question the King himself was, as it were, personally put upon his trial, by saying that, even if his Majesty should be condemned at the bar of that House, it was still some consolation that from that sentence lay an appeal to the people, which under certain circumstances he should think it his duty to make. The indecency of this threat produced a loud and indignant clamour in the House, but it is generally thought that its import had a strong effect upon the division. Lord Henry Petty[1] replied to Canning, but I was too much fatigued to listen to him. At half-past six in the morning the House divided, when there appeared for the original motion 226, for reading the other orders of the day, which had been moved early in the debate by Mr. Osborne, the member for Bedfordshire, 258; Ministers having employed their time so well during

[1] Lord Henry Petty had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Talents Administration. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that he afterwards became Marquess of Lansdowne, and a most important member of the Grey, Melbourne, Russell, Aberdeen, and first Palmerston Cabinets.

the recess as to have obtained in the House of Commons, in which whilst in opposition they could hardly muster sixty or seventy, a majority of 32 with so large an attendance. So little was this event expected by the friends of the late Ministers, even at the time of the division, that Lord Howick addressed the members in the Lobby, and stated to them that if the present motion was carried, which he had great hopes it was, he should think it was his duty to move an address to the King for the removal of the present Ministers. Upon this occasion Mr. Bragge Bathurst,[1] whose speech I have omitted to mention before, declared that the motion was neither more nor less than a censure upon the King's personal conduct, and broached the doctrine, I believe unheard of before that day, that not only the King of this country may act constitutionally without any advisers, but that there are certain occasions, such as the interval between the dismissal of one set of Ministers and the appointment of another, in which he must so act. If this be admitted, it leads either to the absurdity that in a free government there may be acts of the executive power for which no one is responsible, or to the unconstitutional conclusion that the King himself is amenable. With this doctrine, so completely subversive of the very foundations of our government, Mr. Bathurst led away his band of the adherents of Lord Sidmouth, whose accession to office at the formation of the late Administration had been the circumstance which had exposed it to the greatest share of the obloquy and reproach which fell upon it. This transaction affords another illustration of the great political and moral truth, that those by whose friendship and alliance you are dishonoured and

[1] Lord Sidmouth's brother-in-law, the 'brother Bragge' of the *Anti-Jacobin*.

degraded are sure to be the first to abandon and betray you.

On Friday Mr. Lyttelton gave notice that on Wednesday, April 15, he should make a motion relative to the change which had taken place in his Majesty's councils, and on the last-mentioned day he accordingly moved a resolution to that effect. . . . The order of the day was moved by Mr. Milnes,[1] the member for Pontefract, a young man of only two-and-twenty years, in a speech of great fluency, facility, and dexterity, but more remarkable in my opinion, who disagree with him, for a manner and tone so perfectly Parliamentary as to be surprising in so young a speaker than for depth or force of argument. The greatest blemish of it was that it wanted that which is the nerve and soul and marrow of a speech—real truth and integrity; and one short sentence, in which he said he was at heart a warm friend to Catholic concession, took away the whole foundation from under the superstructure which the rest of his speech was labouring to erect. This effort, however, caused a great sensation both in the House and with the public, and the greatest hopes are naturally conceived of the author of it. Mr. Ward[2] spoke next, and delivered a speech which, notwithstanding the general good opinion of his abilities, I believe few expected from him. It struck me as quite the speech of a debater—powerful, animated, and full of the most pointed sarcasm and attack. Towards the end he adverted with proper severity to the measure of recalling Lord Melville to the Privy Council; but though a

[1] The father of the late Lord Houghton, generally known as 'Orator' Milnes.

[2] The gifted and eccentric Lord Dudley, a personal friend of William Lamb's.

similar remark, which had fallen from Sir S. Romilly in the former debate, had been taken up with considerable warmth by Sir P. Murray, Lady Melville's brother-in-law, no notice was taken by any one person upon the Ministerial side of the House of what Ward said upon this occasion, although it was much more pointed and direct. . . . . The Master of the Rolls rose about half-past five o'clock in the morning. He waived the question whether the King can act without responsible advisers or not, but he strongly blamed the last Administration for making public what had passed between the King and themselves, and said that it was a novelty in Parliamentary history that the grounds upon which a monarch had dismissed a Ministry should be made known to the House, and still more so that they should be made in it a subject of debate and discussion. He surely forgot that in case Ministers are dismissed on account of measures which they advise to be taken, by bringing forward those measures in Parliament they may always and have often brought into discussion the actual grounds upon which his Majesty was advised to dismiss them. If in the present instance they had been dismissed for persevering with the Bill in question, the agitation of that Bill would necessarily have occasioned the conduct and motives of his Majesty to be discussed in Parliament. But when, as the case is, they are dismissed for resistance to an unconstitutional act done either by the King of his own mind or at the suggestion of others, it is impossible to bring such act under the view or the consideration of Parliament in the regular and preferable mode of agitating a public question. ('Black. Com.' i. 243–246.) The case is of so fundamental a nature as to require and justify the direct interposition of the House of Commons; but such

is the excellence of the constitution in its theory, that even this extreme case might have been redressed without such direct interposition, without in the slightest degree infringing upon the prerogative of the Crown. . . . The House divided about six o'clock in the morning—244 for the orders of the day, 198 against them and for the original resolution.

In the meantime, on Monday, April 13, the Marquess of Stafford had moved in the House of Lords a resolution containing the import of both of those which I have mentioned as having been moved in the House of Commons. I was present for some time, but it was so hot that I could not stay. It was a very able, strong, and animated debate. At six o'clock the House divided—171 for the motion of adjournment, 90 against it and for the resolution. Upon this occasion Lord Selkirk—who had always been considered one of the firmest adherents of the late Administration, and bound to them by the fastest of all ties, inclination, turn of thought, and similarity of principle—as if determined to justify the popular reproaches cast out against his country, went over at once to the new Ministry, in consequence, as it is said, of some miserable difference with their predecessors about the interest and patronage of a Scotch county.

Sunday, 26th.—It is generally known this morning (and was, indeed, known last night) that the present Parliament, which met for the first time on Monday, December 16 last, is to be prorogued tomorrow and dissolved the next day, having sat little more than four months. The dissolution of the last Parliament, which was chosen in the summer of 1802, after four sessions, because the Ministers thought they did not command a sufficient majority in it, was

reprobated as a corrupt and unjustifiable exercise of the prerogative by those very persons who have advised the present measure upon exactly similar grounds, though in very dissimilar circumstances. It will, however, answer their purpose. In addition to all the strength which the Treasury influence obtains equally for every Administration, I have no doubt that the cry of 'No Popery,' 'Church and King,' &c., will carry many of the popular elections, and thus they will gain a large majority in the ensuing Parliament.

I dined at Lord Grenville's with Lord Howick, Coke of Norfolk, Sir A. Pigott, Sir S. Romilly, Ward, Lyttelton, Nicholson Calvert, Sir W. Lemon, Sir George Cornwall, Tierney, Freemantle, Trevanion, and some others. A large computation of the number of members who will vote with us in the new Parliament.

Monday, 27*th*.—This morning was employed by the Committee of Finance in preparing a report of the transactions at the Pay Office which have come out in the course of their enquiries.[1] . . . But the labour of the morning was all in vain. As soon as the Speaker began to count the House, Mr. Giles, who had been appointed Chairman (Mr. Bankes having, after studiously deferring the making of this report, gone into the country this morning), standing at the Bar with the report in his hand, the Usher of the Black Rod knocked at the door, and summoned that House to attend his Majesty in the House of Peers, where the Speech was read from the Throne, and the session concluded by prorogation. With respect to the Speech it is enough to say of it, as Lord Howick did say, that the whole transaction had begun in the most foul and shameless

[1] A now forgotten scandal connected with army contracts.

calumnies, and had ended in the grossest and most contemptible hypocrisy.

Tuesday, 28*th*.—No news, and nothing stirring but preparations for elections on all hands. For the credit of the good sense of the country the cry of 'No Popery' seems to be strong, and our friends weak everywhere.

Saturday, *May* 2.—I heard from Mr. Adam that as Lord William Russell's and Lord Henry Petty's elections, the former in the county of Surrey, the latter for the University of Cambridge, were insecure,[1] the Duke of Bedford could not promise certainly to bring me into Parliament.

Wednesday, 13*th*.—I left London for Brocket Hall, having settled my election for the borough of Portarlington in Ireland. With respect to the general result of the elections, the weight of power and property in Opposition is so great that a considerable number of the friends of the late Administration must be returned, and perhaps upon this occasion they feel the advantage arising from there being a certain number of seats which are not bestowed exactly according to popular opinion. The clamour against Popery has already had the effect of deciding the elections in many boroughs, and although there has not been as yet any manifestation of its power in a county, yet I am very apprehensive that, strengthened as it is by other circumstances of unpopularity, it will prevail against Lord W. Russell in Surrey, and in Middlesex against Mr. Byng. The only gleam of public favour which has shone upon us has been at Norwich, where Mr. Fellowes was turned out and Mr. W. Smith chosen upon the express ground of the former having voted against Mr. Lyttelton's motion.

[1] Petty was, however, returned, defeating Lord Althorp and Lord Palmerston.

Mr. Bragge Bathurst, who had been the most decided enemy of the Bill in question, and the most steady maintainer of what he stated to be the rights of the prerogative, and certainly the most effectual supporter of the present Administration, was received by the mob at Bristol with hissings, hootings, and peltings, and abused from one end of the town to the other as a most determined abettor of Popery, if not himself an obstinate Papist. It is impossible not to laugh at this blindness, ignorance, and fury; at the same time it is also impossible not to be struck with the most serious alarm upon the subject.

January 1, 1808.—On the first Parliament met, in a situation of affairs growing as usual more and more alarming, after a recess crowded with events, some of them calamitous, some of them subjects of consolation, but all of them strongly indicating the lost condition of the Continent and a crisis most alarming to this country. The expedition against Denmark, the hostility of Russia, the departure of the Russian and Austrian Ministers, after a fruitless attempt at mediation on the part of the latter, the Orders in Council, and the disputes with America, were all mentioned in a more or less explicit manner in his Majesty's Speech. . . . But what more particularly engaged the attention of both Houses was the unexpected demand upon the part of his Majesty's Ministers of a vote of approbation of the expedition to Copenhagen, without laying any of the papers relating to it before the House, and this, too, accompanied with the acknowledgment that they were not in possession of the secret articles of Tilsit, that they were in possession of information of the nature and substance of those articles, that they could not lay it before the House without betraying the source from

which it was derived, and consequently exposing the persons concerned to the vengeance of Bonaparte and precluding the country from all chance of future information through the same or any other channel. . . . Mr. Ponsonby, who upon this occasion began his career as leader of the Opposition in a sensible speech, as I thought (I believe it is generally considered rather inadequate to the situation which he is to fill),[1] gave notice that he should take an opportunity of moving for the papers respecting the expedition, which motion is since fixed for next Monday sennight. To this Canning replied that he might move for some papers, the granting of which he should not oppose, but that with respect to the secret information of the articles of Tilsit, in his judgment he (Mr. Ponsonby) would never have ocular conviction of it. I think this a circumstance much to be lamented, as it confirms Bonaparte in his assertion that no such secret engagements were signed, and must confirm every person in England or on the Continent who was before wavering in a condemnation of the expedition and of the nation which can sanction it. A short debate took place upon the bringing up of the report of the Address, which was made remarkable by a stronger justification of the expedition by Mr. Yorke than any which had been made the night before by the Ministers themselves, and by a beautiful answer to Mr. Yorke's speech by Mr. Windham, who spoke most admirably both nights, and placed in the strongest point of view possible the immorality and the impolicy of the measure.

[1] Even this qualified praise was changed for the worse later on. 'Remarkable instances in my time of the want of *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*. Lord Chatham, when he sought after the command of the expedition to Walcheren; Mr. Ponsonby, when he undertook to be leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons.'

Sunday, 24*th*.—I went to St. James's Church in the evening and heard Dr. Andrews preach. Both his manner and language very plain, forcible, and impressive, his doctrines rather strong and dogmatical.[1]

Monday, 25*th*.—Mr. Bankes moved for leave to bring in the Bill, which was lost last year in the Lords, to prevent the granting of offices in reversion. He was opposed only by Mr. W. Dundas, upon the ground of its violating the King's prerogative. Strange the aversion and abhorrence to everything in the shape of reform entertained by everything of the name of Dundas.

Saturday, 30*th*.—I dined at the King of Clubs, and agreed to be put up to be balloted for.[2]

[1] Here is a somewhat later estimate of the preaching of the Established Church: 'The eloquence of our pulpit is dull and uninteresting either to hear or to read. Deprived as it is of the high and warm tone of enthusiastic devotion which belongs to the Catholics and to the Methodists, it is reduced either to dry reasoning or to the enforcement of moral duties. The former for evident reasons has attractions only for a few, and the latter topic in the hands of our teachers is without force or point, because their discourses are without truth. They are not great representatives of human nature, and, therefore, men have no sympathy with them. They are compelled always to diminish merit and to exaggerate defect. They are always employed in holding up before our eyes a standard of excellence which everyone feels and knows to be ideal, and in painting faults in colours so dark and dreadful that not even the conscience of a sinner can admit them to be just and true. They are like unskilful writers of novels who draw characters entirely virtuous or entirely vicious. The consequence is there is no delusion, because there is no semblance of reality, and the reader is entirely indifferent both to their actions and their fate.'

[2] The King of Clubs was founded in 1801 by a group of friends who were in the habit of meeting at Mackintosh's house—Rogers, John Allen, Robert Smith, Scarlett, and 'Conversation' Sharpe. To these were soon added Romilly and Sydney Smith, and afterwards Lord Lansdowne, Lord Cowper, Lord Holland, Brougham, Porson, Jeffrey, Luttrell, Horner, Hallam, Ricardo, and several others. They met for a monthly dinner at the 'Crown and Anchor' in the Strand, at which the talk was exclusively literary. William Lamb was probably the guest of his brother-in-law, Lord Cowper, with whom he had been dining on the previous night. Though presumably elected, he does not seem to have been a very assiduous member of the club.

Sunday, 31*st.*—I dined at Nugent's with Ward, Brougham, Luttrell, and Sydney Smith, and went in the evening to a meeting of the Opposition members of the House of Commons at Lord Fitzwilliam's, at which Mr. Ponsonby stated the motion which he is to make on Wednesday next for papers respecting the expedition to Copenhagen.

Wednesday, *February* 3.—Long debate upon Ponsonby's motion for the production of papers relative to the expedition to Copenhagen. Canning's reply very brilliant, but, as usual, false and inconclusive. He completely kept out of sight the secret articles of Tilsit, and rested the case entirely upon the general situation of Europe and hostile mind of Denmark. To prove the latter point he read part of a letter from Mr. Garlicke, the King's Minister at Copenhagen, to Lord Grey, when Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with part of the answer, and also a letter from Lord Hutchinson written soon after the peace of Tilsit.[1] Great part of his speech was also employed in charging upon the late Ministers similar principles and intentions to those the execution of which they now attack in the cases of Turkey and Portugal. The best reply to this was made in a short speech by Bragge Bathurst. The debate was dull and lasted till six in the morning. Upon the division the numbers were 253 against the motion and 108 for it.

Wednesday, 17*th, and Thursday*, 18*th.*—Debate upon the second reading for carrying into effect the Orders in Council. Lord H. Petty made the best speech I heard him deliver, and indeed such a one as would have done honour to anybody. The division—94 to 214—worse on our part than I expected.

[1] Lord Hutchinson, afterwards Earl of Donoughmore, had been sent on an extraordinary mission to the Court of St. Petersburg.

Many rumours afloat to-day. In the first place, that the King had made known to Canning that he much disapproved of his conduct in reading the despatches in the House of Commons. This report was much confirmed by Canning's manner during the debate, and I am sure from it of this, that there is something in agitation which displeases him. In the second place, that the King has expressed his wish that the Danish fleet might be kept for the purpose of restitution; and this report I also think rendered probable by the moderate tone adopted by Ministers in the House of Lords. These reports naturally gave rise to others that overtures were making to Lord Sidmouth to come into Administration.[1] Time will show.

Friday, 19*th*.—Canning has swallowed the pill, whatever it was, or his swallowing it has not been insisted upon, for he is all smiles and smoothness to-day. Rumours, however, respecting Lord Sidmouth still continue.

Monday, 22*nd*.—Last night died Lord Lake of an inflammation upon his lungs.[2] He was esteemed a most gallant officer. He had but lately returned from India, where as Commander-in-Chief he had amassed a sufficient sum both to relieve himself from his large gaming debts at home and to place him in a state of affluence for the remainder of his life. He was one of the earliest friends of the Prince of Wales, who was deeply affected at his death.

We now find him intensely interested in the progress of the war in Spain, collecting information from all quarters, and describing at great length the military operations. Among his informants is his relative, Mr. Huskisson. It will be observed

[1] Lord Sidmouth did not join the Administration until 1812.

[2] The conqueror of the Mahrattas at Allighur and Laswaree.

that his boyish admiration of Napoleon has long since evaporated.

November 30.—I this morning finished an imitation in verse of a short chorus out of the 'Prometheus' of Æschylus, beginning at the verse 519 of that play.

December 6.—The newspapers of yesterday contained two bulletins from the French army in Spain: the one dated from Vittoria November 9, and published in Paris November 17, the other from Burgos the 12th, and published in Paris the 19th of the same month. They agree exactly, I believe, with the Spanish accounts with respect to the days of battle and the advance of their arms, but differ widely in their statements of the amount of force opposed to them, and the number both of their own and of their antagonists' killed and wounded. In the latter of these papers is the following passage: 'The army of the insurgents exhibited the most singular contrast (that is, to their own). In the pockets of the officers who were killed were found lists of companies having some of them the name of the "Company of Brutus," and some of them the "Company of the People."' It is said, I know not how truly or upon what authority, that during the beginning of the Revolution in France, when it was the fashion for the most violent democrats to assume the names of ancient patriots, this name of Brutus was the very one for which, in order to mark his republican ardour, Bonaparte changed Napoleon, the present family name of half the monarchs of Europe. At any rate, whether this be true or not, it is curious enough to see in a French public paper circumstances held up to ridicule which, whether they be facts or only invented for political purposes and to alarm the nobility and property of Spain with terrors of Revolution, are grave

and sober and quiet compared to the mummeries and extravagancies of the same Revolution which but a few years ago were universally exhibited in all the principal cities of France. . . . The rest of these papers consist of nothing but ridicule and abuse of the Spaniards, and the most contemptuous mention of the English. These are the arms which, in addition to his own consummate generalship, the experienced skill of his commanders, and the veteran valour of his troops, he uses with great dexterity. All his great success he represents as achieved with the most trifling loss, undervalues and laughs at the prowess of his antagonists, and employs every art that can invigorate the hopes of his adherents and strike despondency into the hearts of his enemies . . .

It appears by the published despatches that Bonaparte has Dutch troops with him in Spain; the contingents of the German Princes are to march to the coast of France, and a levy of 12,000 men is ordered in the kingdom of Italy. When one contemplates his resources, when one thinks of how many rich and populous countries he wields the power and the strength, it is impossible not to tremble, not only for the fate of Spain, but for the final issue of the contest. *Ἔσσεται ἦμαρ*, &c.[1]

December 11.—No further news from Spain. . . . If the great contest for the independence of Spain is lost, as it probably will be, it is evident that the failure must be in a great measure attributed to our ill-judged and ineffectual aid. Defeats such as the Spaniards have received were to be expected. After the former

[1] From the *Iliad*, iv. 164: 'For the day shall come when sacred Ilion shall perish, and Priam, and the people of Priam with the good ashen spear.'

exploits of Bonaparte, no reverse could be so sudden or so complete as to excite surprise in any person of common sense and coolness. But this blow, as it is, has not decided the struggle. Still less would it have done so if, instead of two bodies of 18,000 men each, cut off from one another, and each of them divided into parties scattered at great distances, we could now oppose to him almost upon any point a compact army of 35,000 men, whose operations, skilfully conducted, might engage his attention, embarrass his advance, and give the Spaniards time to recover from the stun which they have received.[1] I do not think, even if the circumstances were in this state, they would redound to the credit of this country, because all the troops that were intended to have been embarked before this news arrived ought to have been upon the Continent long ago. An army of 50,000 effective men ought to have been long ago assembled, either in Galicia, if that had been thought the most advantageous point to act from, as I think it would have been, or in Portugal, if it had been intended that the British troops should act as an army of reserve, either to sustain the attack of the French army and cover the retreat of the Spaniards if they were beaten, or to reinforce them and follow up their success if they were victorious. It is in this latter way only that the army of Sir John Moore could act, for no man could think that the French would suffer him to join the Spaniards before they attacked them. For the first duty of an army of reserve—namely, to oppose itself to a victorious army—this body was much too weak;

[1] The two columns commanded by Sir David Baird and Sir John Moore respectively. In an earlier entry William Lamb had contrasted the dilatory nature of the English efforts in Spain with the decisive manner in which the expedition to Copenhagen was executed.

and it ought to have been considered that it was much more probable that it would be called upon for the discharge of that duty than for any other. Our conduct must cover our councils with disgrace in the eyes of all Europe. Our retreat, abandoning the Spaniards to their fate, must dispirit them to the last degree, and give strength, currency, and an air of truth to all the invectives of the French against us.

With respect to the conduct of the Spaniards themselves, they certainly behaved, in every battle of which we know the circumstances, with great spirit and resolution; but it is a matter of surprise to everybody that, with the determination to resist which has been given out to prevail throughout the country, and with the time they have had to prepare, they have not been able to oppose larger armies to those of the enemy. . . . If this arose only from remissness and want of exertion, and a notion that after the first success the whole battle was gained, the fault may perhaps be yet in a measure repaired, though much good cannot be reasonably expected while those persons who could be deluded by such a chimera remain at the head of affairs. If the insurrection is not so general in Spain as we have been taught to believe, if many of the inhabitants are unwilling to run any hazard or to make any exertion for independence, the case is certainly worse. Bonaparte had then in the first instance only a party to contend with, and his successes will soon procure him assistance and adherents. But the most fatal and desperate, and perhaps not the least likely, supposition of all is, that the thinness of the ranks proceeds from the choice of the leaders and the nobility themselves—from their fear of the consequences of the victory of their country, if that victory should be achieved by armies composed of

the mass of the people and led by officers promoted by their own desert.

When Chamfort was upbraided with the crimes that attended the beginning of the troubles in France he is said to have answered, 'Eh bien! voulez-vous une révolution à la rose?' Now there is truth and meaning in the saying, although not enough to excuse the deeds to which it was applied, and of that truth and meaning Spain, ever since the Constitution of the Central Junta, seems to have lost sight. They seem to have thought that they could have a revolution with perfect order and tranquillity, a revolution upon the plan of ours in 1688. The transactions in England are an excellent model for similar circumstances; but it must be recollected that things could not have been carried on as they were if Louis XIV., with an army of 100,000 men, had occupied the passes into the country and the strongest fortresses. The only two measures of internal regulation which I have as yet heard of as being adopted by the Central Junta are the restraining the liberty of the Press and the permitting the return of the Jesuits. The first, where all the enthusiasm of the people and all the means of exciting it are peremptorily required, cannot be good; and for the second, although the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain might originally have been unjust, it is not easy to see the advantage of placing it in the very front of a change which, if it is to do anything for the country worthy of mention, must totally subvert and destroy all the principles and modes of policy which have influenced the Court of Spain since the accession of Philip II.

Monday, 12*th*.—So no newspapers. If *Bonaparte* should unfortunately succeed in subjugating *Spain* and placing his brother upon the throne of *that* country,

what will be the effects of that event upon the present situation of England, considered with respect to her external interests and the great contest in which she is engaged for her existence as an independent nation? In the first place, it is in everybody's mouth that the Spanish colonies will be immediately separated from the mother-country, will be at peace with and will carry on a free, or at least an advantageous, trade with England. Now certainly the evident interest of the Spanish and American colonies, their extent, opulence, and power, and the known desire of many in them for emancipation, make this, I will admit, the most probable result. But, at the same time, I cannot help fearing that it is being much too sanguine to anticipate it as certain. Against the causes which I have enumerated above there must be set the influence of the French party; the dexterity of the emissaries of Bonaparte; the natural wish which all native Spaniards must feel to preserve the empire entire under whatever king may be established in Europe; habits of long nominal obedience; the great reluctance with which all who have been accustomed to serve make any effort to cast off their yoke, unless that yoke is rendered intolerable by the policy of their masters; the difficulty which there will be in settling an independent government, the dissensions and parties to which that question will give rise, and the adroit advantage which will be taken of those dissensions by the French Government at Madrid,—all these considerations make the point at least doubtful, though certainly I incline to the opinion that the colonies will erect themselves into a separate empire. If the contrary should unfortunately happen, England will be left in that respect much in the same situation as that in which she stood before the explosion in Spain. Because, though

it will no doubt be the prime object of the Spanish Government, acting under the control of France, to exclude from the American colonies all goods of English manufacture, yet it must be recollected that the mother-country, if she can govern at all, must govern, as she long has, by sufferance as it were, and with a light hand, and she may be able to work upon the prejudices of the colonists—prejudices no doubt inflamed by the ill-judged expedition to Buenos Ayres—so far as to induce them not to grant any further privileges to our commerce; yet she will hardly be able to prevail upon them to forego the advantage of any indirect existing trade by which these articles are imported for consumption.

An article in the *Edinburgh Review*, 'written, I suppose, by Brougham,' is the text for the following speculations:—

I should fear that the unfortunate issue of the insurrection, if unfortunate it is to be, will do more towards entirely extinguishing in the mind of the age the faint and hardly living embers of the love of freedom, than all the splendour of the first successes of the patriots and all the praises of their virtue and valour will towards reviving and rekindling them into a flame. I cannot help considering it as a proof of the weakness of the general wish in Europe for emancipation that, notwithstanding the encouragement of the example of Spain, notwithstanding the length of her resistance (for long it must be called in comparison with the late wars which the nations of Europe have waged against France), notwithstanding the cheering and glorious aspect of her cause, no one corresponding movement has taken place in any one of the numerous and formerly spirited countries which are now sub-

jected to France, no one attempt has been made to take advantage of so favourable an opportunity. . . . What a spectacle does the present state of Europe display to the eye of any man who is at all acquainted with her previous history! Switzerland and Holland, both of which cast off the yoke of the House of Austria; the Netherlands, which so recently asserted their rights against the same family; Italy, so often contended for and never before reduced—all silent and tranquil under the new domination of France. What is the cause of this phenomenon? It cannot be all effected by terror and force. I have never met with any correct information upon the conduct of the governments which Bonaparte substitutes in the place of those he subverts; but, as they could hardly be administered in such a manner as to make those that preceded them be regretted, so I much suspect that the improvement is so great as to be very sensibly and gratefully felt.[1] The *Edinburgh Review* says: 'He must rule Spain with a light rod, because he knows that there is no other chance of ruling her long.' But does he rule anywhere with a heavy sceptre? He gives his soldiers plunder in the moment of victory, he levies contributions, which fall with the greatest weight upon the higher orders; but on the other hand he represses all disorder, he administers prompt and satisfactory justice, he does away with the enormous and galling privileges of the nobility and clergy. All these would be more precious and more rare boons to Spain than even to any other country which he has yet overrun. . . . The Spaniards are a proud and high-spirited people, and will soon learn not only to endure but to cherish a government which

[1] This was certainly true so far as the smaller states of Germany were concerned, and it is a most acute observation.

protects and elevates them, and to bear with cheerfulness burdens which they see are employed with vigour and skill for the purpose of renewing their former triumphs and restoring to them their place among the nations.

December 13.—The *Courier* of yesterday morning, which is said, I know not with what truth, to be a good deal under Canning's direction, has an able article strongly and justly censuring the late military measures in Spain. Lord Melville is expected at Wimbledon the end of this month. These are slight grounds to form even a conjecture upon, but is it totally improbable that an attempt should be made to turn Lords Castlereagh and Hawkesbury out, or at least to remove them from the situations they now hold, and to take Lords Melville and Wellesley in? The country thinks the two latter more able than the two former, and so strength would be gained by the changes.[1] I doubt whether there would be any advantage in it. I dare say, now that the measures have failed, they will detect very acutely and reprobate very forcibly the errors which have been committed; but I believe, if they themselves had had the direction of affairs from the beginning, they would have been managed very much in the manner in which they have been.

William Lamb next gives a long account of the proceedings of the Court of Enquiry into the conduct of Sir Harry Burrard and Sir A. Wellesley, and the difference of opinion which resulted in the unsatisfactory Convention of Cintra.

December 14.—It may be said that these are evils to which every army is subject upon that most common and most probable of all events, a difference arising

[1] Lord Melville (Mr. Dundas) never returned to office, but Lord Wellesley became Foreign Secretary on December 6, 1809.

between the first and the second in command. I admit it—difference of opinion is the bane of all armies, and more particularly, I apprehend, of armies unused to service, and most usual amongst inexperienced officers. But this being the case, every care should be taken to avoid and to guard against this evil, not, as in the present case, to foment and produce it. A commander should, of course, be the officer of whose sense and courage the Minister who appoints him has the best opinion; but when appointed the utmost confidence should be reposed in him, and the more he acts upon his own single opinion with respect to the general plan of operations to be pursued, the more likely, I believe, will his enterprises be to succeed. All branches of executive government bear but ill diversity and change of councils. In all of them plans prosper but ill if they are begun by one hand and finished by another; but certainly, of all of them, the one which most imperiously requires unity of design and unity of execution must be war.

December 15.— . . . But, as things are, unanimity, energy, desperate courage, and patience that no suffering could overcome might yet carry the cause. The Spaniards seem in a great measure to have forgotten the system upon which they gave out they would act—to shun pitched battles, to harass the enemy with eternal skirmishes, to take strong positions in the mountains, to exhaust the country before the hostile army, and to trust to want, fatigue, and famine. Is this mode of warfare practicable for any long space of time in the face of such a general as Bonaparte? and, if it be practicable, are the Spaniards prepared to endure the hardships and privations of it? I do not mean to ask whether the lower orders in Spain are so prepared, because I believe,

them to be the most frugal people in the world; but are the nobility and persons of property resolved to abandon their estates to the enemy, to give up their mode of living, and to admit of no compromise which might be offered them? If they were, and if their affairs were conducted with the vigour and skill which no doubt is to be found somewhere amongst them, although they were attacked by an enemy dexterous beyond anything in the art of facilitating and making possible the march of most numerous armies through the most difficult countries, and possessed of power to second that dexterity such as never before fell to the lot of mortal men—by an enemy who never despatches 1,000 men except under the command of a consummate officer, and whose soldiers are flushed with his former triumphs and confident in his abilities,—though these are fearful odds that are matched against them, yet still, such is my reliance upon the energy of a whole people contending for their independence that I should not despair of their success.

December 16.— . . . The combinations of Bonaparte are not so easily frustrated, and it is to be observed that it is his own ruling mind and the influence of his presence which carries success along with it, for when his armies are committed even to his most celebrated officers they do not seem to be commanded much better than those of other nations. This is proved in some measure by the campaign in Egypt, by the late campaign in Portugal, but more especially by the campaign in Spain before his arrival there, which, though it was directed by some of his most distinguished generals, such as Murat, Moncey, Bessières, does not appear to have been conducted with judgment, and certainly was not attended with success.

William Lamb was now much exercised by the Orders in

Council against the commerce of the United States, a question upon which he had special information from Mr. Mansfield, who was attached to the British Embassy at Washington.

December 23 *and* 24.—When Parliament meets the correspondence between the two Governments . . . will no doubt be produced, and we shall then be better able to judge of the fairness of the above statements[1] and the justice of the reasonings. I should apprehend no material misrepresentation would be found. I have no doubt the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his adviser, Mr. Stephen, see with great regret any disposition to concession upon the side of America, as it threatens the permanence of their beloved system, according to which they wildly hope, by the destruction of neutral commerce, to strike a mortal blow at the power of France, and reduce her to the same state of weakness as at the conclusion of the war of 1756. This attachment to an opinion is met, I believe, by a corresponding love of theory on the part of the President of the United States, who sees the interruption of trade without regret because he thinks it turns all the industry and capital of his country to the improvement of agriculture. So that while persons of such influence in the Governments of their respective countries entertain sentiments in favour of the present state of half-hostility, there is little hope of bringing the disputes between the two nations to an amicable determination.

Canning's despatch is thereupon quoted *in extenso*.

The general reasoning employed appears to me to be false. It is admitted that the American Government has at different times represented the measure in different

[1] In the speech of President Jefferson on the opening of the American Congress.

lights, as an act of impartial hostility and as an act of municipal regulation. Now it is evident that they were fully justified in so doing, for the measure in fact in its own nature bears the two characters—it was an act of precaution against the violence of the two belligerent Powers, but it was clearly also an act of an unfriendly nature towards each of those Powers. America may fairly say, 'This is an internal regulation of my own, against which you have no right to remonstrate, but it is also detrimental, as I think, to your interests, and therefore I may fairly offer to you the withdrawing of it as a price of some concession upon my part. It is, of course, for you to judge of the value of the proffer, but I do not reason incorrectly in making it. The violence with which you are compelled to resist the violence of France compels me to adopt a restriction of police, which is in my opinion injurious to your trade. Mitigate your violence towards me and I will withdraw my restriction, as far as it regards you. This is my proposition; reject it if you please, but do not let me be answered with a sort of ostentation of logical distinctions, as if I had placed a point in two lights when it will only bear to be viewed in one.' The letter goes on to state the determination of France to attack the existence of Great Britain through its commercial prosperity; and then, in a strain, as it strikes me, of coarse, bad irony, that 'by some unfortunate circumstances, without any hostile intention, the American embargo did come in aid of the blockade of the European Continent,' &c., &c., precisely at the most critical moment. 'The struggle,' it proceeds, 'has been viewed by other Powers not without an apprehension that it might be fatal to this country. The British Government has not disguised from itself that the trial of such an

experiment might be arduous and long, though it has never doubted of the final issue. But if that issue be such as the British Government had confidently anticipated—if the blockade of the Continent, as it has been triumphantly styled by the enemy, is raised even before it had been well established, and if that system, of which the extent and continuity were the vital principles, is broken up into fragments utterly harmless and contemptible,—it is nevertheless important in the highest degree to the reputation of this country (a reputation which constitutes a great part of her strength) that this disappointment of her enemies should not have been purchased by any concession; that not a doubt should remain to distant times of her determination and of her ability to have continued her resistance; and that no step that could even be mistakenly construed into concession should be taken on her part while the smallest link of the confederacy remains undissolved, or while it can be a question whether the plan devised for her destruction has or has not either completely failed or been unequivocally abandoned.' This surely is absolute Quixotism. Those who go to the furthest in their assertion of the paramount importance of national honour, and who would most readily adopt the sentiment that 'reputation constitutes a great part of the strength of a people'—a sentiment rather metaphorically than literally true, and more fitted for a burst of oratory than for a state paper—must here think their favourite doctrine carried to an unexpected and unwarranted length. If 'the blockade is raised,' &c., and 'the system broken up into fragments utterly harmless and contemptible'—if there be any foundation for this strong language, surely the facts that form that foundation cannot be so obscure and doubtful as to make them

liable to the misconstruction which is affected to be apprehended. If the state of things be such as is described in the beginning of the sentence, surely the decision of the end of it savours a little of useless obstinacy and pride. If the concession can be made to America without injury to England, it is but a natural act of kindness to make it; if the making it would be advantageous to England, it is also an act of policy. But the dignity and honour of the Crown and of the people are but pretexts upon this occasion. The real ground of the line pursued by Ministers is its political advantage. They hold the present state of commercial transactions to be useful to England and injurious to France, and if they can make it out to be so in any great degree (for the odium of the measures is not worth a trifling advantage) they certainly act right.

January 22.—Parliament met on the 19th. A poor debate in the House of Commons. The Speech stated that the King had disapproved of some of the articles of the Convention of Cintra, and was, upon the whole, unobjectionable. The Ministers very fairly offered all the information necessary for full inquiry upon all the contested points—viz. the Convention in Portugal, the campaign in Spain, and the negotiation with America. I foresee a session of much uninteresting debate. The fault of Opposition is a determination to make differences of opinion where, in fact, there exist but few, and those trifling. The fault of Ministry is a want of weight and dignity of character, and a mode of answering when they are in the right which sometimes puts them, and often makes them appear to be, in the wrong.

Spain, however, continues to absorb his attention.

Whether the reforms which he promises[1] will be

[1] That is, Napoleon, in his proclamation to the Spanish people.

executed, whether they will be beneficial to the Spanish nation, whether they would be considered by it as advantages, are questions which yet remain to be decided. That they will be beneficial is, I think, sufficiently proved by the mere statement of them; that they are considered so is also pretty evident from the circumstances of Bonaparte's holding them forth as boons and measures of conciliation. Otherwise you must consider him either a mistaken politician or a wild disinterested reformer. It must, however, be observed that these advantages, if advantages they be, Spain will owe to her spirited and gallant resistance, which, though it has failed of its professed object—independence—will have achieved, perhaps, its most substantial end—reform. If she had submitted quietly to the usurpation, the new Government, anxious to preserve the tranquillity which it found, would have been afraid of touching the privileges of the nobility and clergy, or of irritating the superstition of the populace. But the general insurrection, and the obstinacy of the struggle, at the same time that they have relieved Bonaparte from the necessity of managing the higher orders, have also taught him the necessity of really conciliating the minds of so gallant a people. Thus I have always remarked it to be the case in all the concerns and circumstances of life, from the affairs of nations to the squabbles of children. So perversely is human nature constituted that tameness and submission only produce further injury and insult, but boldness and resistance, although they bring on greater temporary suffering, never fail in the end in part to effect their object, and to ameliorate the condition of those who rely upon them.

January 25.—Yesterday an extraordinary Gazette was published, containing the despatches which had

been received from the army.[1] Sir David Baird is not dead, but by all accounts likely to do well. A narrative of the action which was fought on the 16th is given in a very simple, perspicuous, and feeling letter from General Hope, upon whom the command devolved, to Sir David Baird. It might serve as a model for the statement of military transactions, and must give every one who reads it a high idea of the judgment of its author. No accounts of the loss are yet received; General Hope says he would estimate it at between seven and eight hundred killed in the action; and considering the almost desperate situation of the troops, embarking after so long a march in the face of superior numbers, the success has surely been achieved at as little expense as could have been hoped or expected. Many more, of course, perished during the retreat.

On the 29th he gives an account of the debate arising out of Colonel Wardle's charges of corruption against the Duke of York:—

Wardle certainly committed a great imprudence in charging the Duke of York in the first instance with being a party to these frauds and impostures. It was quite unnecessary, as the statement of the facts of the commissions, &c. having been sold by Mrs. Clarke would have been sufficient to induce the House to go into the inquiry, and if the Duke be really implicated it must have been brought out in the course of the investigation. Yorke's, Perceval's, and Canning's speeches were loud and threatening, and looked somewhat like a wish and attempt to bully and intimidate. If there be no foundation for the charges at all, it will have been a most fortunate attack for the Duke. If they are proved

[1] After the battle of Corunna.

to the extent to which they are made, which it is impossible to believe that they will be, it is unnecessary to say what must be the consequence. If it is made out that Mrs. Clarke has bargained in a few instances to sell commissions, that the commissions have been conferred, and that she has received the money, I think the character of the Duke ought to bear him through innocent in the opinion of the country, but I am afraid it will not. If there appears to have been any great number, any long series, of such practices, it will form a case of heavy and grievous suspicion.

February 21.—Last night Petty brought on his motion respecting the Convention of Cintra, and proposed two resolutions—the first, in the words of his Majesty's answer to the city of London, that the Convention had disappointed the hopes and expectations of the nation; and the second, that it originated in the misconduct of the Ministers. . . . Their answer to the charge deserves to be marked as the weakest and most curiously empty argument which, amongst many of the same quality, though in a less degree, I have ever heard urged and relied upon in the House of Commons. 'You complain of the equipment of the army,' they say, 'but with that army, so equipped, Sir A. Wellesley, if he had been suffered to follow his own opinion on August 21, would have achieved all the objects of the expedition by forcing the French to lay down their arms.' *Ergo*: the army was in all respects sufficiently equipped; which last proposition is built upon the hypothesis, conjecture, and guess of what the result of a fresh attack upon the French on the day of the battle of Vimiera would have been. Sir A. Wellesley had the good taste to state himself that those who came to command him ought to have taken his advice; a principle

which, if admitted, may go God knows how far towards rendering commanders-in-chief subordinate to any general officer who may happen from circumstances to have local or other experience which the commander-in-chief may be without. Sir Arthur Wellesley has about him everything that gives promise of great military genius and of the character of an enterprising and successful commander, but it is also evident that from his habits he is better fitted for chief commands than for subordinate situations.

On April 27 he chronicles the certainty of hostilities between France and Austria, and on May 11 the results of the battle of Aspern.

Champagny, in the latter part of his report of April 12, says that the Emperor of France does not wish the destruction of Austria, but that she must be reduced to the measure of a pacific Power. There can be little doubt that at this moment, employed as he was with the affairs of Spain, he entered into a new war with reluctance, and wishes to be as speedily as possible relieved from the embarrassment of it. The consequence of these dispositions will probably be a magnanimous offer of peace to the Cabinet of Vienna, which it is much to be feared the weakness of the latter, worked upon and increased by these misfortunes, will induce them to accept. This, it appears to me, is the only politic war which has yet been waged by Austria—*pia arma, quibus nulla nisi in armis relinquitur spes.* The only chance she has of saving herself from the condition of a dependent Power, and from annihilation at the moment at which it shall suit the views of Bonaparte, is to persevere in hostility to the last extremity. If she were influenced by this determination, if her people were ready to maintain their independent

government with their blood, and if there were in Spain spirit and unanimity to take advantage of the diversion—three conditions of the existence of which, I fear, the most reasonable and the most alarming doubts may be entertained—there would still remain a hope of something being effected for the secure settlement of the affairs of Europe.

There is, of course, much argument and more conjecture afloat respecting the cause, the extent, and the importance of this event. The intelligence, as it stands, amounts to this, that an accident has prevented him from destroying the Austrian army, and subjected him to a very considerable loss, a loss which, though I should be unwilling to doubt the correctness of his account in other material respects, I have no doubt is much more considerable than he himself admits. It is plain that this is a greater check than any he has ever experienced since he became Chief Consul of France, for though at Eylau he owned to a greater loss of men in killed and wounded, yet he claimed, and, as I have heard Lord Hutchinson who was there say, claimed with justice, all the honour and much of the advantage of a victory, though in this country he was reputed and universally believed for a very considerable time to have been completely repulsed and defeated. It was always observed of the late Mr. Pitt, that if upon any occasion he delivered a speech which was generally thought less forcible than ordinary, he was sure upon the very next opportunity to make fully up for the slightest degree of failure by one of those exertions of eloquence which he had so completely at command. It is impossible not to feel apprehensive lest the next account from Vienna should be something of this nature—a victory so decisive as totally to absorb the memory

of the former defeat, especially as I see a paragraph from Paris state that they had accounts from Vienna of the bridges being re-established on the 25th ult. At the same time this news gives hope which hardly any one was sanguine enough to entertain. Ever since the usurpation of Spain it has struck me that he was playing his game with an imprudent confidence and boldness, and that, by grasping at so much, he was running the hazard of losing all. Considering the immense territories which he has to keep in subjection, and the fatigue, the loss, and the dispersed state of his armies, his situation must become very dangerous if the Austrian armies fight and the Austrian councils continue firm. If the Hungarian nation were ready to stir, I should consider his complete failure, in this present expedition at least, as certain.

After this William Lamb gave up journalising to any considerable extent. The entries under the year 1810 are confined to the barest mention of important facts—Lord Wellesley's progress in Spain, the marriage of the Emperor to the Archduchess Maria Louisa, and so forth.

January 27, 1811.—The year 1810 which has recently expired has been certainly distinguished by much fewer military achievements upon the part of the French than almost any of those which have lately gone before it: the descent upon Sicily can scarcely be supposed to have been earnest; the siege of Cadiz has languished; little progress has been made towards the completing the conquest of Spain; the invasion of Portugal, compared with former advances, has been feeble and dilatory. Bonaparte seems in some measure to have paused in his career, whether from weakness and in order to recruit his means, or whether from design,

in order to mature his plans and to render his future success more rapid and complete, is yet undecided.

In 1805 took place the capitulation of Ulm, the battle of Austerlitz, and the Peace of Pressburg. In 1806 the battle of Jena and the overthrow of the Prussian monarchy. In 1807 the battles of Pultusk, Eylau, Friedland, and the Peace of Tilsit. In 1808 the Spanish Revolution, and the overthrow of the Spanish armies at Burgos, Espinosa, and Tudela. In 1809 the battles of Ratisbon, Aspern, and Wagram in Germany, and Talavera and Occana in Spain. If we consider the natural resources of the nations whom France has thus either conquered or subjected to her influence, the advanced state of their civilisation, and the equality of arms and military tactics, the history of the world has no conquest to be compared with this astonishing course of triumphant wars and successful negotiations.

Here the Journal comes practically to an end, though there are one or two entries as late as the year 1815. The fact seems to be that, disgusted with the prospects of the Whigs, Mr. Lamb ceased to take much interest in politics. It is a pity that we have not his account of the debates on the Regency Bill of 1810, when he was entrusted by his leader with the duty of moving an amendment to the resolution for limiting the functions of the Prince. But, for the rest, he was lax in attendance and chary of speech. At the general election of 1812 he fell a victim to the 'No Popery' cry, and for four years was absent from St. Stephen's.

CHAPTER III

MARRIED LIFE AND LITERATURE

1805–1828

THE years of William Lamb's absence from Parliament were not destined to be years of contentment and repose. For it was during them that the crisis of his married life occurred, which ruined his happiness, embittered his mind, and filled him with abiding grief. It is evident that the husband and wife were not a well-assorted couple. Lady Caroline, though gifted and fascinating, was hopelessly capricious and volatile; William Lamb, perhaps, too easy-going and good-natured to act as the moderator of her impulses and director of her waywardness. She afterwards accused him in her novel, 'Glenarvon,' probably with some measure of truth, of never attempting to take her seriously; while his view of the question is to be gathered from entries here and there in his Commonplace Book:—[1]

The general reason against marriage is this—that two minds, however congenial they may be, or however submissive the one may be to the other, can never act like one. It is the nature of human things that no man can be free and independent.

'Alas! there is no man who is free. Whoever he be, he is either the slave of wealth or of fortune or the multitude of his fellow-citizens, or the provisions of the

[1] This Commonplace Book is probably the one which Greville saw at Brocket after Lord Melbourne's death (*Greville Memoirs*, 2nd series, iii. 376). It seems to have been begun about 1809, and kept up, with more or less regularity, until 1832. Where it is not otherwise stated, the quotations in this and the following chapter are taken from it.

laws constrain him to act in opposition to his own judgment.' (Eurip. 'Hecuba,' 864.)

But in stating this great moral truth the philosophical poet has omitted that which is the greatest check and limitation of the natural liberty of action—the influence of relations and friends. By taking a wife a man certainly adds to the list of those who have a right to interfere with and advise him, and he runs the risk of putting in his own way another very strong and perhaps insuperable obstacle to his acting according to his own opinions and inclinations.

By marrying you place yourself upon the defensive instead of the offensive in society, which latter is admitted to be in all contentions the most advantageous mode of proceeding.

Before marriage the shape, the figure, the complexion carry all before them; after marriage the mind and character unexpectedly claim their share, and that the largest, of importance.

Before I was married, whenever I saw the children and the dogs allowed, or rather caused, to be troublesome in any family, I used to lay it all to the fault of the master of it, who might at once put a stop to it if he pleased. Since I have married, I find that this was a very rash and premature judgment.

The effect upon persons in general, and particularly upon women, by what others say of their husbands, &c., &c. Nothing's fixed. Their opinion rises or falls according to what they hear in the world, according to the lightest observation or the most casual remarks.

Every man will find his own private affairs more difficult to manage and control than any public affairs in which he may be engaged. Cromwell and Monk

were more thwarted and disconcerted, the former by his daughter, Mrs. Claypole, and the latter by his wife, as may be seen in Clarendon's 'Life,' than by all their adversaries, external and domestic.

Nevertheless their life for six or seven years was fairly happy. Lady Caroline gave birth to a son on August 11, 1807, to whom the Prince was godfather. Unfortunately the child, though handsome and well-grown, became early subject to fits; his intellect never developed; and paternity, which might have been to the father a source of consolation, only developed into an additional cause of unhappiness.[1]

The following letters of Lady Caroline's to her husband may be dated from the postmarks at 1809:—

May 27, 1809. AFTER dear boy was gone to bed I set out for Panshanger, having begun 'Adèle de Sénanges,'[2] which amused me so much that I was there in no time. I found the bride and bridegroom in high health and spirits, though they really behave themselves in such a decorous manner I should imagine they must have been married before.

Lord and Lady Kinnaird are here, the former better than I ever hoped to see him. Panshanger is very pleasant in all respects. How sorry I am to hear Edward Paget has lost his arm. It was a very gallant action, I hear; pray bring me accounts of it. If it is true your friend Lord Cawdor lost his Bill by one only, I shall be inconsolable. Lord Kinnaird and Lady Kinnaird are writing more letters than Lord Castlereagh ever did. Plunger ran away from me yesterday, and Francis found him parading about at the top of the park with some

[1] Augustus Lamb lived until November 27, 1836, the object of his father's constant care and affection.

[2] *Adèle de Sénanges, ou Lettres de Lord Sydenham* (1794), by Mme. de Flahaut, afterwards Baroness de Souza, the friend of Mme. de Rémusat (Mme. de Rémusat's letters, *passim*).

stray poultry. I would not bring my pretty Phillis with me, as you wished me not.

They read last night some of the new Montagu letters.[1] You cannot think how clever they are—unlike the style of a girl of fourteen; but really, as so many married people are so like children in body and mind, it is quite well now and then that the reverse should take place. Tum, I have just been stung.

ὅττί γε τυτθὸν
θηρίον ἐντὶ μέλισσα καὶ ἁλίκα τραύματα ποιεῖ.[2]

I will study to be as pleasant a friend to you as Caroline George is to her husband.[3] We seemed all of us acting a play last night in a new house, old people and all, met together from odd quarters. I think lately, my dearest William, we have been very troublesome to each other; which I take by wholesale to my own account and mean to correct, leaving you in retail a few little sins, which I know you will correct. Also do not say 'java.' Condemn me not to silence, and assist my imperfect memory. I will, on the other hand, be silent of a morning, entertaining after dinner; docile, fearless as a heroine in the last vol. of her troubles, strong as a mountain tiger, and active as those young savages, Basil's boys, to whom, by-the-bye, you will give one shilling apiece. You should say to me. *raisonnez mieux et repliquez moins.*

Ryde, September 4. I BEGAN Sir John Moore's letters again, and am much struck, if the account is true, with the bad

[1] One of the numerous editions of Dallaway's selections from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Writings and Correspondence.*

[2] 'The bee is a tiny beast, but what wounds it inflicts!'—Theocritus, *Id.* 19, l. 6.

[3] Mrs. George Lamb, born St. Jules.

management there seems to have been at first setting out. I cannot also conceive how, with such letters and opinions daily coming forth, such a general infatuation about the Spaniards could prevail. What occasioned your mother and Mr. Gill, my mother and so many others of all sides and parties, to tell such a pack of stories, which seem to have been perfectly groundless? I can allow a great deal for enthusiasm, but such conduct as the Spaniards seem in general to have shown towards us is certainly a great damper to such feeling. How true I think this passage in one of Sir J. Moore's letters to Lord William Bentinck, who seems to have been a very sensible man: 'When you say the chief and great obstacle and resistance to the French will be offered by the English army—if that be so, Spain is lost. The English army will do, I hope, all which can be expected from their numbers, but the safety of Spain depends on the *union* of its inhabitants, *their enthusiasm* in their cause, and their firm and devoted determination to die rather than submit to the French.' If such an opinion is true, which I firmly believe it is in all such cases, what a shame it seems to devote our brave armies to a hopeless cause for a weak, ungrateful people! My dear brother, too! In Sir J. Moore's letter to Mr. Frere[1]—where one can see he is in a tiff about his appointment—he agrees with you about titles wrongly bestowed, for he says he trusts he will excuse anything omitted in the letter, thinking it better to give no titles at all rather than a wrong one. By-the-bye, my blood curdled with the quantity of black bile Frere's pompous, insignificant, impudent letter brought forth. I could not stand it at all; such a nonchalant coxcomb. I almost wish he had

[1] Hookham Frere was responsible for the ill-judged advance upon Madrid, which was made against Sir John Moore's better judgment.

been with the German Legion; we should then have seen what sort of a figure he would have cut at Talavera.

I went yesterday to church, and heard the same man preach you heard last Sunday. He takes rapid advances in the Methodistical style; the last time we were 'Oh, my dear brethren,' this time we were 'Oh, my dear brethren and Christian warriors and hardy veterans,' with a great deal about love and souls in torment. He so entirely lost himself at the conclusion in the military simile he had adopted that he addrest three old women in a voice of thunder, which stirred them amazingly, calling them to fight, and strive, and obtain the kingdom of heaven by blood, and loudly addressing them by the appellation of 'Ye veteran Christian warriors.'

Before church Lady Anne Bingham, Sarah, and I went to call on Dr. and Mrs. Hooly, who live in a pretty-looking cottage not far from the Duke of Dorset's. They were very glad to see us. Their children are ugly; Mrs. Hooly prettier and thinner than when we saw her; the doctor passing ugly in the meek, scientific way he was of old. There is nothing frank and agreeable in his manner; I call it a sly, polished, coldish manner. The babies bellowed incessantly. They all sent numberless messages to you. And now I wish you good-bye, and God bless and preserve you, and keep you from all harm both in body and mind. I have been playing all day with that pretty little Augustus of yours. He is the dearest child I ever saw, and shows where you are gone by pointing to the sea. Mr. Cotman informed me in person, last night, that you were safe at Southampton, in health and spirits, by twenty minutes past ten, which information he repeated three times with a 'yes' of triumph at the end. Sarah heard a woman yesterday talking of meeting-houses. She said she never should

go to them sort of places again, for she had once been and it had stirred her in such a manner that she was not herself for some days after.

So their life went on until 1812, when Lady Caroline was introduced to Byron, and that ill-starred acquaintance began which speedily developed into infatuation on her part and boredom on his. Into the details of her extravagances, which culminated in her stabbing herself with a paper-knife—'ye dagger scene of indifferent memory,' as Byron called it[1]—it is unnecessary to enter, as they have already been the theme of countless notices in memoirs and magazines. Of her husband's feelings we know little or nothing; for Lady Caroline's statement to her friend Lady Morgan, that he did not care,[2] is simply incredible, and in direct contradiction to her letters, in which she invariably speaks of him as the best and kindest of men. Still, the tradition is that he endured her conduct with a considerable show of outward philosophy. The family were not equally tolerant, and almost persuaded him to effect a separation; but the arrangement fell through, though it is certain that it was not, as Lady Caroline declared, averted by the publication of 'Glenarvon,' the record of her passion for Byron. The pair continued to live together; nor was Lady Caroline, with all her faults, by any means devoid of gratitude and good-feeling. At a dinner at Paris she suddenly asked one of the party, in the hearing of the rest, whom he supposed she thought the most distinguished man she had ever known, in mind and person, refinement, cultivation, sensibility, and thought. The person addressed suggested Lord Byron. 'No,' was the reply; 'my own husband, William Lamb.'

And here we may as well bring a sad story to its conclusion. The next ten years or so do not offer much food for remark. An interesting acquaintance was made in 1819, when Lady

[1] The date was July 5, 1813, and it is probable that the acquaintance did not long survive the performance.

[2] 'He cared nothing for my morals. I might flirt and go about with what men I pleased. He was privy to my affair with Lord Byron, and laughed at it. His indolence rendered him insensible to everything. When I ride, play, and amuse him, he loves me. In sickness and suffering he deserts me. His violence is as bad as my own.'—Lady Morgan's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. pp. 199–200. (See also Hayward's Essay.)

Caroline canvassed William Godwin on behalf of George Lamb, who was standing for Westminster. The philosopher was subsequently invited to Brocket, and became the recipient of numerous letters from the lady, while William Lamb interested himself in a subscription that was started to relieve his necessities.[1] Again, about the beginning of 1824, we find Edward Lytton Bulwer, who was still at Cambridge, a guest at Brocket. 'Lamb, by the way,' wrote Bulwer, 'is a singularly fine character for a man of the world.'[2] The relations between the two during this period seem to have been conducted on the most affectionate terms; but in June 1824 the event occurred which was to make separation inevitable—namely, Lady Caroline's encounter with Byron's funeral, passing along the Northern Road, as she was coming out of the Brocket gates for a morning ride.

The shock was a terrible one to her; and her eccentricities and violence of temper became so marked that the family insisted on a separation, which was effected in the September of the following year. After one wild outburst, Lady Caroline, as will be seen from the following poem and letter, submitted to her fate with a good sense which is greatly to her credit.

December, 1825.

LOVED One! no tear is in mine eye
Though pangs my bosom thrill,
For I have learned when others sigh
To suffer, and be still.
Passion, and pride, and flatt'ry strove,
They made a wreck of me;
But oh! I never ceased to love,
I never loved but thee.

My heart is with our early dreams
And still thy influence knows,
Still seeks thy shadow on the stream
Of memory as it flows:

[1] Lord Melbourne never lost his interest in Godwin, and it was partly through his exertions that Godwin's sinecure post of Yeoman-Usher of the Exchequer was not abolished by the Reform Parliament.—C. Kegan Paul, *Life of Godwin.*

[2] Earl Lytton's Life of his Father, vol. i. chaps. x. and xi., which contain a discriminating and favourable description of Lady Caroline's character.

Still hangs o'er all the records bright
Of moments brighter still
Ere love withdrew his starry light,
Ere thou hadst suffered ill.

'Tis vain! 'tis vain! no human will
Can bid that time return;
There's not a light on earth can fill
Again love's darkened urn.
'Tis vain—upon my heart, my brow,
Broods grief no words can tell;
But grief itself were idle now—
Loved one, fare thee well.

In my opinion, these verses are very full of feeling, although they have faults.

Thank you, dearest William, for your kind letter. Bell[1] sends you the 'compliments of the season.' Once, when more refined, she would not have made use of a vulgar phrase; but now we mix with common fellows in common society we shall speak the vulgar tongue. Write to me soon. I shall go and see our boy.

She lived with the old Lord Melbourne, at Brocket, where her husband continued to see her at frequent intervals, until in 1827 he went to Ireland as Chief Secretary. In the autumn of that year it was evident that her days were numbered.

From Dr. Goddard to the Hon. W. Lamb. October 2, 1827.

LADY CAROLINE has just desired me to let you know how she is. Some time ago I had wished to do so, but her ladyship prevented me, as she would by no means unnecessarily frighten or distress you.

It is with feelings of the deepest regret that I have lately observed symptoms of water collecting about her, . . . and I have apprehensions of the greatest danger. Of course Dr. Evans has occasionally seen her; but the idea of any further advice, and the remedies

[1] Her dog.

that may be the result, seem to trouble her much. Her conduct has been very amiable; indeed, her behaviour of late has altered very much in every respect for the better. She appears convinced she cannot ultimately recover, but with feelings of perfect resignation says she does not mind to die.

P.S.—Lady Caroline has sent for Mrs. Hunter, who comes down to-day. Her ladyship desires me to write from her, as she has just asked me what I am writing.

Lady Caroline to Hon. W. Lamb.

I REALLY feel better; the medicines agree with me, and I have everything I possibly want. I am sure you will be glad to know that Frederick Lamb came over with Emily to see me, and sat with me nearly an hour. He was very entertaining, and with his usual satire seemed to abuse every place, but particularly Spain. You know, of course, that he is appointed to Lisbon, to go there with Don Miguel. I should like to know what will happen. He does not look at all well, and wears very long, bushy hair, which, I think, makes him look thinner, but it is not, as ours, turning grey. I will send you a message to Walter; I have never seen Lloyd, but I believe he is quite well. Mrs. Hunter has been so very ill that she probably could not write to you. She is coming down to-day, and shall answer for herself. I hope you will go and see Duncannon, and pray remember me to them all.

Augustus has not been well; perhaps he leads too regular a life, and does not take enough exercise, and too much tea and bread and butter. Everybody I have seen makes great enquiry after you and after him. I am quite surprised to hear you have game from Brocket; pray, if you can get a pair easily, send me some grouse or some moor game. My brother William is not well

at Harrogate. I take my simple medicines, and as Dr. Goddard is writing for me, he will probably tell you what they are (blue pills, squills, and sweet spirit of nitre, with an infusion of cascarella bark).

God bless you, my dearest William. I will write to you myself very soon; do not forget to write a line to me. Everything at Brocket is doing quite well.

She lingered on until January of the following year, when her husband, coming over from Ireland, was with her at the last. 'William Lamb,' wrote her brother, William Ponsonby, to Lady Morgan, 'behaved throughout as I always knew he would.'

From the cares of his married life William Lamb sought distraction in sport, and still more in literature and society. Readers of Lord Dalling's 'Life of Lord Palmerston' will remember the shooting-party at Mr. Conyers', in 1810, at which William Lamb had better sport because, according to Lord Palmerston, the wind blew harder on his side of the cover. But crooked powder, more than the wind, was probably to blame for Lord Palmerston's failure; and Lord Melbourne, throughout his life, was accounted an excellent shot. Nevertheless, his bags were rather modest compared with modern performances. Thus, in October, 1818, his game-book accounts for 206 head of game, as the result of eighteen days' shooting; and through the season of 1821–22, during which for some reason he only shot for twenty-one days, he killed seventy-six head. He was also something of a field naturalist. Thus he notes down that—

I saw upon the river a bird, black and about the size of a widgeon, with an orange-coloured bill. I fired at it; it dived untouched and rose at some distance. I fired again, and so on four or five times, without hitting it, it always sinking at the moment of the gun going off. I could have tired it out by forcing it to dive repeatedly, but I left it upon the water. It is, I believe, what is commonly called a velvet duck. My gun missed fire twice running, and the bird did not dive. It went off the third time, and the bird dived,

which proves that it does not go down merely at the sound of the flint against the hammer.

Later on he had an encounter with a hedgehog, which displayed great reluctance to curl up into a ball, as a hedgehog should.

But literature was, after all, his chief solace, and it was during this period of his life that he acquired those stores of knowledge which, combined with the original turn of his mind, made his society so delightful. The Commonplace Book contains abundant records of his studies, which ranged over nearly all the classics, and many English historians, notably Clarendon and Burnet, of whom he was especially fond. It is, of course, well known that he was an excellent classical scholar, and could read both Latin and Greek currently. As he read, any passage that struck him as being of special importance was transcribed, translated, and not unfrequently illustrated by parallel passages from modern writers. Some of these parallels are most suggestive, and there have been many worse annotators to a Greek tragedy than William Lamb. He was also an ardent philologist and a bit of a grammarian. But, interesting as the book is, it would be unfair to quote to any great extent remarks that were evidently jotted down without an afterthought. Still more unfair would it be to quote renderings into verse from the Greek tragedians, which were seldom completed, and evidently never retouched.

The following passage, translated from Herodotus, 'Thalia,' 229, will illustrate William Lamb's method of reading:—

'When Cambyses felt that the wound was mortal, he inquired what the name of that city might be. They answered him, Ecbatana. But it had been before told him by the oracle of Butum that he should end his life in Ecbatana. He indeed conceived that he should die old in Ecbatana in Media, where all his power and possessions lay. But the oracle intended this Ecbatana in Syria. And when upon this inquiry he heard the name of the city, being struck both with the misfortune which had come upon him in the insurrection of the Priest

(Magus) and with his wound, he recovered his right mind and said, "Here, then, it is the fate of Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, to die." '

See the death of Henry IV. in Shakespeare :—

K. Hen. Doth any name particular belong
Unto the lodging where I first did swoon?
War. 'Tis called Jerusalem, my noble lord.
K. Hen. Laud be to God!—even there my life must end.
It hath been prophesyed to me many years,
I should not die but in Jerusalem;
Which vainly I supposed the Holy Land:—
But, bear me to that chamber; there I'll lie;
In that Jerusalem shall Harry die.[1]

A parallel between Alcibiades and Charles Fox is perhaps rather obvious, but it shows that Mr. Lamb was no longer content to accept without qualification the political traditions of his family :—

'For being in high consideration with his fellow-citizens, he indulged in devises and pursuits, such as the breeding of horses, and expenses far beyond his means. This conduct of his was in the end not the least cause of the overthrow of the Athenian republic. For many of the people became greatly alarmed, as well at his manner of living, so contrary to the habits and customs of his country, as at the great power of understanding which he betrayed in everything he undertook, *and, considering him as aiming at the possession of absolute authority, conceived an inveterate enmity against him.* Insomuch that, although he conducted in his public capacity the war with the greatest ability, yet persons were in private so disgusted with his pursuits and habits, that they committed the management of affairs to other hands, and in no very long time *effected the* destruction of the State.' [2]

[1] *Henry IV.* part ii. act 4, last scene.

[2] Thucydides, vi. 15, 4.

Upon this passage it may first be showed how much the private life of Alcibiades affected, not only his own interests, but the more important ones of his country. Secondly, how similar are the means by which Alcibiades lost the confidence of his fellow-countrymen to those which alienated the affections and confidence of a large portion of this nation from Mr. Fox. First of all, the horse-racing and expensive pursuits; secondly, the contempt of the feelings and habits of his own country; thirdly, the power of his understanding, which, joined with the former two, became an object of terror rather than of hope and confidence. Ὡς τυραννίδος ἐπιθυμοῦντι πολέμιοι καθέστασαν might have been written by a Ministerial historian of the proceedings upon, and the consequences of, the India Bill.[1]

Unlike Colonel Newcome, he would have little or nothing to do with translations. Thus he writes:—

All translations from the ancient into modern languages are flat, tame, and insipid; and, however faithfully they convey the sense, however exact the translation may be, they do not impress it upon the mind with any of the strength or force of the original; so that, in my opinion, it is a matter of much difficulty to learn even the facts, of much greater to catch any of the spirit of ancient history, either from translations or from narratives compiled from the works of ancient authors. I have read over Leland, Mitford, and others—authors of great labour and merit, the second, particularly, a writer of great learning, of a searching and examining spirit—and have retained nothing clear or connected from the perusal. But Herodotus, in the

[1] When the caricatures represented him as Carlo Fox Khan, riding on an elephant.

original, has in a few days given me a better knowledge of what is known of the times the story of which he recounts than the others have in many months, or, indeed, I believe, ever would have done.[1]

Here are some more general remarks:—

A curious book might be made of the great actions which have been performed by persons whose names have not been preserved, the glories of the anonymous.[2]

If any observation strikes you to be made upon a book you are reading, sift it to the bottom before you go any further, and do not, from idleness, mark the page and leave the subject to be reconsidered hereafter. You never can return to a book with the same recollection of the connection of its parts, with the same vivid impressions—in short, with a mind so well prepared to work vigorously and effectually upon it, as you had when you were engaged in the first regular perusal of it.

In works of imagination, or where the principal beauty arises from the force and liveliness of the expression, the first sketch is apt to be the best. But if you have to write two letters upon the same subject, and that subject rather a difficult and intricate one, the second letter will not only be written with greater facility, but will be found, when finished, to be much the shortest, easiest, and clearest.

Some persons who have themselves no relish for the works of Homer and Virgil and the other ancient writers, determine in consequence that those authors

[1] However, the story of Aristodemus, as told by *Mitford (v. 228), is* described later on as 'a good subject for a tragedy.'

[2] Suggested by Tacitus's story of a Roman prisoner. *Hist.* iv. ch. 34.

are deficient in the real beauties of composition, and that their reputation only arises from the blindness, ignorance, and prejudice of their admirers. Sir Joshua Reynolds tells us in his works that when he first saw the paintings in the Vatican he was to the highest degree mortified and dispirited at finding how little he was gratified with them. His conclusion from this effect was, not that these works were undeserving of the high reputation which they enjoyed, but that he himself had made very little real proficiency in the true principles and taste of his art. Those who detract from and condemn by wholesale the works of the ancients would do well, perhaps, to consider whether an inference similar to that of the modest and enlightened artist would not be more just than that which they so presumptuously and precipitately draw from their feelings and judgment upon this subject.

Never disregard a book because the author of it is a ridiculous fellow.

Nothing injures poetry so much as over-consideration and cold and critical correction. If an expression be bold and striking, if at first sight it impresses on the mind a patriotic or a sublime feeling, though upon weighing it over and over you should find that it is subject to some ambiguity or misconstruction, or that in some other way it may be critically erroneous, do not advise the author to alter it. It will have upon the first reading the same effect upon others as it had upon you; that first effect is the object of poetry, and leaves an impression which outweighs a hundred verbal or even argumentative objections.

'It is after the manner of the Greeks to honour our relations, and also not to seek to be superior to the

laws.'[1] These expressions of respect for the laws, of their inviolability, are frequent in the Greek tragic poets, and from them we might collect that they did not live under an absolute monarchy. Mr. Hume has observed, as an argument against the existence of limitations to the power of the king in England, that throughout Shakespeare there is no use of the word or mention of Liberty in the sense in which we now understand it, but there are many expressions of the same nature and import as is above cited, which prove that Shakespeare knew and understood and prized that which is the real safeguard of Liberty, the certainty of Law:—

> 'It may not be; there is no power in Venice
> Can alter a decree established,' &c.

See the whole scene of the trial in the 'Merchant of Venice.'

Pindar, after wishing fresh victories to the champion whom he is celebrating, goes on thus:—

'He who possesses a secret hoard of wealth, smiles in the consciousness of his superiority to others—even in paying his debt to death he knows it is not without glory.'[2] If the sublime be in those passages, as Longinus says, which produce any inward glorying and exaltation of spirit, there is no poet more truly sublime than Pindar, nor any passage in Pindar more highly so than the foregoing.

Scholars will, perhaps, find interest in the following remarks:—

> ὄνομα δ' ἑκάστου διατριβὴ πολλὴ λέγειν,
> ἐχθρῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῖς τείχεσιν καθημένων.[3]

[1] Euripides, *Orestes*, 486.
[2] Pindar, *Isth.* i. 96.
[3] Euripides' *Phœnissæ*, 751. 'It would cause much delay to tell the name of each foeman as he sat beneath the walls.'

This passage seems to be a censure upon Æschylus, who, in the same circumstances, does go through the names of the commanders, but may be taken as a mode of avoiding the servility and competition of the same task. Great proof of the attention that was paid to the art and power of the poet in Athens, that novelty of story seems to have been so little attended to. Succeeding poets seem to have a pride in working upon the stories which had been successfully treated by their predecessors, and simply to see in what instances they could construct the story better. Thus each of the three great tragic poets has a play on the story of Electra. No instance of such competition upon our stage except the 'Anthony and Cleopatra' of Shakespeare and the 'All for Love' of Dryden. In England, a new tragedy upon Jane Shore would be damned by its very name.

Superiority of judgment shown by Æschylus in his 'Choephoræ' in two points over Sophocles in his 'Electra.' First, the solemn and formal manner in which Clytemnestra receives the news of the death of Orestes. Secondly, the entirely withdrawing Electra from any share in the actual killing of Clytemnestra. In this latter point the play of Euripides upon the subject is still more shocking and revolting than that of Sophocles.

Superiority of Shakespeare to all tragedians. Read 'Choephoræ' 'Electra' of Sophocles, 'Electra' of Euripides, 'Semiramis' of Voltaire, and then read 'Hamlet.' Read 'Zaïre'—certainly a most complete and striking tragedy—and then read 'Othello,' and you will discover it.

In spite of, or rather perhaps because of, his enormous reading William Lamb shrank from authorship, and beyond

collecting materials for a Life of Sheridan—which were used to a slight extent by Moore—and writing some reviews and occasional poems for the *Literary Gazette*,[1] he made few or no appearances in print. His reasons for abstinence from publication may be collected from the following remarks:—

Persons who have industry enough to collect information, have rarely ability enough to make use of it; and, *vice versâ*, those who have ability to make use of it have not industry to collect it; and so by far the larger share of the talents of mankind is rendered useless. Before you decide upon writing, ascertain what is really wanted to be written—a task which will require a good deal of reading to enable you to perform.

I have read too much and too little. So much, that it has extinguished all the original fire of my genius, and yet not enough to furnish me with the power of writing works of mature thinking and solid instruction.

The Note-book contains numerous observations on society, sometimes written—as might be expected from the writer's disposition and circumstances—in a decidedly cynical vein.[2]

Give every subject and every expression, if you can,

[1] As the Autobiography of William Jerdan, the editor of the *Literary Gazette*, is for the most part without dates, it is impossible to say when William Lamb's contributions to the paper began, or when they ended. The only one identified by Jerdan is the graceful poem beginning:—

'What! is the ancient shepherd dead,
The patriarch of the mountains gone?'

The obituary notice of Lady Caroline in the *Gazette* has been attributed to William Lamb, but can hardly be his work. As for his relations with Jerdan, according to the Autobiography, they 'never grew to intimacy, nothing beyond an occasional friendly intercourse.' Certainly, Lord Melbourne's answers to Jerdan's subsequent appeals for assistance in literary ventures were couched in the most formal terms, and invariably in the negative.

[2] The motto of the book is, 'If a thought arises in your mind which you think worthy of being preserved, write it down immediately; if you delay, you have lost it.' And two passages follow, one from the *Rambler*, the other from Aristotle, illustrative of the positiveness of youth.

an indecent turn; that makes a witty man. Impute to every action a base or wicked motive; that makes a profound and sagacious man. Act without regard to times and circumstances in a manner which is best calculated to defeat your own objects; that makes an incorrupt and honest man.

Your friends praise your abilities to the skies, submit to you in argument, and seem to have the greatest deference for you; but, though they may ask it, you never find them following your advice upon their own affairs, nor allowing you to manage your own without thinking that you should follow theirs. Thus, in fact, they all think themselves wiser than you, whatever they may say.

Among the smaller accidents of life no one gives more pain at the time, nor is recollected with greater vexation, than the having blurted out in company something which applies disagreeably to the situation or connections of some one who is present; not because we have hurt the feelings of another, but because our own vanity is mortified at having made so egregious a blunder.

You should never assume contempt for that which it is not very manifest that you have it in your power to possess, nor does a wit ever make a more contemptible figure than when, in attempting satire, he shows that he does not understand that which he would make the object of his ridicule.

It wounds a man less to confess that he has failed in any pursuit through idleness, neglect, the love of pleasure, &c., &c., which are his own faults, than through incapacity and unfitness, which are the faults of his nature.

When a man is determined by his own inclination either to act or not to act in a particular manner, he

invariably sets about devising an argument by which he may justify himself to himself for the line he is about to pursue.

Persons in general are sufficiently ready to set themselves off by communicating their knowledge, but they are not so willing to communicate their ignorance. They are apt, both in writing and conversation, to stop when they come to the precise difficulty of the subject which they are unable to get over, with such common phrases as 'if it were easy to push these considerations much further,' or 'with the rest you are perfectly well acquainted.' Now every man, almost upon every subject, is acquainted with that of which another is ignorant; and the consequence of this false shame is that much less mutual assistance than might be given is given, and human knowledge is less complete and accurate than there exist the means of its being rendered.

Wrong as it is, I never can feel repentance or regret for the hours which I have passed in pursuits which really amused me at the time, although they were pursuits of folly or vice. But I look back with great dissatisfaction and remorse upon the months and years which I have spent in idleness, in sleeping and sauntering, as much without present pleasure as future fruit and advantage.[1]

Neither man nor woman can be worth anything until they have discovered that they are fools. This is the first step towards becoming either estimable or agreeable, and until it be taken there is no hope. The

[1] The remark was suggested by Aristotle: 'And for the most part strong desires are followed by some pleasure. A satisfaction results from the recollection of how they have been gratified, or from the expectation of how they will be. As those who in burning fevers are afflicted with thirst have a pleasure in the memory of having drunk, and in the hope of drinking again.'

sooner the discovery is made the better, as there is more time and power for taking advantage of it. Sometimes the great truth is found out too late to apply it to any effectual remedy. Sometimes it is never found out at all; and these form the desperate and inveterate cases of folly, self-conceit, and impertinence.

These extracts may not unfitly conclude with a dissertation on keeping accounts, which, except in that it fails to mention the possibilities of staving off a settlement by an occasional five-pound note 'on account,' is a complete guide for the impecunious:—

'You must pay the amount of the debts which you contract.' This is a position which cannot be denied, and therefore it is absurd, as some persons do, to trust to expedients, to accurate keeping of accounts, and close investigation of the articles of bills, instead of betaking themselves to the retrenchment of their expenses. These are the companions and guardians of economy, but they are not economy itself. The account-book may be examined every month with the utmost regularity, and the balance found on the wrong side at every examination. The great advantage of keeping accounts is that an exact knowledge of your past expenditure enables you to form an exact estimate for the future. At the same time management will do something. If your expenditure either amounts to or somewhat exceeds your income, it appears to me to be a great convenience not to purchase the whole of any one material article at one shop. It will be found more convenient to have 25*l.* each to pay to four tradesmen, than 100*l.* to one. A creditor is less anxious after a smaller debt. If it is required, two out of the four may probably be induced to wait somewhat longer, when the one has probably an immediate necessity for so large a

sum of money. In short, a man to whom you owe a great deal which it is inconvenient for you to pay is your master, and of a man to whom you owe a few pounds, which you can throw upon his counter at any time, you are the master; and this latter appears to me much the most natural order of things. It may be said that no one of the four is under so great an obligation to you as the one; and that, therefore, you do not make so fast a friend by the one method as by the other. But then each of them is in continued hope that he shall soon obtain your sole custom, and so is under the influence of expectation of future advantage, which is full as strong as gratitude for past services.

If you make an estimate of your expenses for the coming year, and upon that estimate you find that they exactly amount to or only fall little short of your income, you may be sure that you are an embarrassed, if not a ruined man.

Wealth is so much the greatest good that Fortune has to bestow that in the Latin and English languages it has usurped her name.

CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM LAMB AS A CANNINGITE

1816–1830

When William Lamb re-entered the House of Commons in 1816, as member for Northampton,[1] he was a Whig in name, and continued to sit on the Opposition side of the House, but a Canningite in deed. It is probable that almost from the first he was out of sympathy with many of the Whig tenets. The tenderness for Napoleon which prevailed at Holland House had little attraction for him, despite his disapproval of the methods by which the war was carried on; and he felt that while England was fighting for existence the cry for reforms might well be hushed.

'One great difference between the conduct of the reformers of the present day and those of the time of Charles I. is that the latter chose a period of perfect tranquillity and security from external enemies, a period when almost all foreign nations were by their own distractions disabled from interfering with England, for putting into execution their schemes of amelioration. The former exclaim against grievances and press the most vital measures at a moment when the power and inveteracy of France threatens our existence as an independent nation.'[2]

He deplored, also, the mistaken action of the King at the commencement of his reign,

[1] He was returned on April 16 in the room of George Ponsonby. Mr. Torrens says he was elected by Portarlington, and soon afterwards by Peterborough. Mr. Lamb was elected for Portarlington in 1807, and Peterborough is evidently a slip for Northampton.

[2] Suggested by Thucydides, iii. s. 38. 'Persons who, to describe them in one word, are looking after something different from the state of society

'because, by indisposing and alienating the great families from the Court, to which they were naturally sufficiently attached, he raised up an opposition more bitter and inveterate than any other, from the disappointment of what they conceived to be their just pretensions, and who, as they were more disposed, so from their natural strength in the country were they the more able, to go to greater lengths both in language and measures than an opposition differently constituted would have been prepared for, or, indeed, than would have been suffered in them if they had attempted it.'

William Lamb was by no means insensible to the value of party ties, and persuaded himself, rather paradoxically, that—

'in politics you may serve the cause of wisdom and justice better by remaining with those to whom you have attached yourself, even after you disapprove much of their conduct and prefer that of their adversaries, than by leaving them. Nothing can justify a man in unsettling the minds of others, weakening the force of reverence, authority, and example, except a conviction as clear and strong respecting the consequences of continuing in the faith of his fathers as that which is stated in the text.'[1]

Still, the *via media* of Canningism possessed great attractions for a man abhorrent of extremes, and, early prejudices once thrown to the winds, the personality of the great statesman did the rest. 'Canning told me,' or, 'I remember Canning saying,'

in which we live without sufficient understanding of our present circumstances.'

[1] This remark was called forth by Burnet's story about Peter Walsh, the Franciscan, who, though a Protestant by conviction, determined to remain a Catholic, saying that 'No man ought to forsake the religion in which he was born and bred, unless he was most clearly convinced that he most certainly would be damned if he continued in it.'—*History of His Own Times*, p. 195, fol. ed.

are phrases which occur frequently in Lord Melbourne's later letters, and there can be no doubt that he was influenced during his career in the House of Commons by Canning more than by any other political leader. The process of conversion was, indeed, fairly complete in 1812, when Brougham, the self-constituted censor of the Opposition, complained to Lord Grey that Lamb was as much of a Canningite as J. W. Ward, and declared that his defeat at the polls was not to be regretted.[1]

As to his own status as a politician, William Lamb had moments of doubt and diffidence.

> Sir Edward Coke says, somewhere or another, that he is certain that God enlarges and enlightens the understanding of men when they are sitting in Courts of Justice. Such is the difference between a man who by his habits and feelings is formed for public affairs, and one who is unfitted for them. The former finds himself encouraged, invigorated, and strengthened by the consciousness that he is acting upon the spur of the occasion before the eyes of men, subject to their censure in his failure, but sure to reap their approbation by his success. All these circumstances oppress and overwhelm the latter, and deprive him of the use of those powers which perhaps he possesses in an eminent degree. By this [Sir E. Coke's saying] we must, of course, understand that he found in that situation his own mental perceptions more quick and clear, and his judgment more settled and distinct, than upon other occasions. For myself, I must own the House of Commons has upon me quite a different effect. I can walk in the shrubbery

[1] Letters to Lord Grey of August 2 and October 6, 1812 (*Brougham's Life and Times*, vol. ii.). There is malevolence but some truth in his remark that politicians like Ward and Lamb had a weakness 'for little prize essays of speeches, got up and polished, and useless, quite useless, for affairs. To have Canning, the leader in this line, against them, and sneering at them, they do not like; and not being men of very great minds (though very good and clever men—one part of them, at least) they would fain at all costs be with him.'

here at Brocket Hall and reason and enlarge upon almost any topic; but in the House of Commons, whether it be from apprehension, or heat, or long waiting, or the tediousness of much of what I hear, a torpor of all my faculties almost always comes upon me, and I feel as if I had neither ideas nor opinions, even upon the subjects which interest me the most deeply.

The opinion of others, however, was widely different. Lord Castlereagh said that he might become Premier if he would only shake off his carelessness—a failing apparent rather than real—and set about it; and the Regent, no mean judge of character, remarked with emphasis, 'Sligo, mark my words, that man will, some day or other, be Prime Minister.'

Still, during the next few years his career does not call for any protracted comment. He incurred additional unpopularity with the Whigs by voting for the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in 1816, and by supporting the Six Acts in 1820. In 1819, however, Lamb, who, on November 29, exchanged his seat for Northampton for the representation of Hertfordshire, is found acting with his old friends, and supporting Lord Althorp's motion for an inquiry into the state of the country. It is probable that George Lamb, who was waging contests for Westminster, in which success alternated with failure, was more before the public, though he received valuable support in his canvass from his eldest brother.

In 1822 Canning, on the suicide of Lord Castlereagh, became Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons. The following speculations of Lamb's, which have hardly been fulfilled, were not impossibly evoked by the great sentence: 'I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old.'

What a prospect does the establishment of the independence of South America open to the imagination! Hereafter, when great and mighty States, under whatever form of government, insular and continental, shall have arisen in the New World, when culture shall have covered the face and population spread itself through-

out the extent of those vast regions, when armies shall be raised proportionable to that population, when arsenals shall be formed capable of equipping and harbours of containing the fleets which their boundless forests afford the power of building, the affairs of our times and our countries, which appear to us so weighty and gigantic, will be looked upon by the philosophers and statesmen of those periods in the same manner as we regard the history of the contests between the States of Greece or of Italy. The violent and desperate religious war of thirty years, the war of the Succession, so important in its consequences, and, lastly, the overwhelming and devouring war of the French Revolution, will be considered, perhaps, as we consider the Peloponnesian war, as a series of actions in which great virtues were exercised and great talents displayed, but utterly insignificant when compared to the great armies now in motion and the vast territories now in dispute.

Of the change that promptly came over the conduct of affairs Lord Melbourne, long afterwards, gave a description in a letter to Lord Tavistock :—

Windsor Castle. November 14, 1838.

WHEN I found that I had left the Duke's[1] letters out of my own, I put them into another cover and directed them. I hope you have received them. I should think that John's wishes, as you explain them, could surely be carried into effect. It is only doing what, in fact, ought to be done, and was done by Canning in the year 1822. Partly from the easiness of his nature, which let everybody do as they liked, partly from a knack which he had of shuffling over important questions nobody knew how, and partly from jealousy of Canning, Castlereagh had either taken or suffered to

[1] That is, the Duke of Bedford.

be cast upon him the whole business of the House and management of every question. When Canning succeeded to him he—for I had a conversation with him upon the subject—who, whether from consciousness of his own superiority or from more generous feelings, had no jealousy of anybody, at once determined to put an end to this, to make each Minister transact his own business, to obtain as much assistance as he could, and only himself to exercise a general superintendence, and to come forward when he was required. This was the right state of things, and this may surely be restored. There are some advantages in doing all yourself, particularly—which is not the case at present—if you have any sulky, refractory, discontented, or crotchety colleagues. Silence and absence are good tests for sulkiness and ill-humour. Adieu.

All this while he was making up his mind and bringing his reading to bear upon the great questions of the day—Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform. His notes on Catholic Emancipation are numerous; Herodotus and Bishop Burnet, the Argives of Ancient Greece and the Huguenots of France, are all pressed into service. As might be expected, his conclusions are more optimistic than those of a later period, when, surveying the question, he is reported to have said, 'The worst of it is, that the fools were in the right.'

When it is said that the granting the Catholic question would have no effect in conciliating the Irish, we overlook the effect of general feeling. When distressed manufacturers turn factious, when ploughmen out of work set fire to barns and ricks, it arises from a general unreasoning spirit of violence, which is generated in their minds by their distressed circumstances, a malignant, but to the uncultivated mind not unnatural, wish of involving others in the distress which they themselves are suffering, a bitter comparison between

their own misery and the prosperity of their neighbours. The feelings of contentment are often as blind and as little founded on the real advantage of those who indulge them as the feelings of dissatisfaction, and the granting of such a boon, the deliverance from such a badge of inferiority, would spread a general sunshine without much reference to the actual share of benefit obtained either by individuals or by bodies of the community.

My opinion is for granting civil rights, as far as such equality is compatible with safety both to the doctrines and the superiority of the Protestant establishment. As to all the resolutions which have been entered into at their meetings declaring their right to unqualified concession, the best answer would be the enactment of the measure with such limitations and under such conditions as may seem good to the wisdom of Parliament.

In the same way he was considering the question of Reform, and fortifying his mind by large doses of Cobbett's 'Parliamentary History,' Aristotle's 'Politics,' and Clarendon. His conclusions were against a change:—

Majority—will of all—cannot acquiesce in it, touch upon it with reluctance—*in curiâ populum defenderem*,[1] &c., &c., but cannot go so far as to admit, when I am speaking, that the majority of the people are always in the right.

[1] 'Mihi semper in animo fuit ut in rostris curiam, in senatu populum defenderem'—one of his favourite quotations from Cicero. Compare a speech on June 25, 1839. 'We must decide by majorities, which, perhaps, after all is not a very satisfactory method of settling questions. But the imperfections of human nature force it upon us. God forbid that I should say that a majority is always in the right. I have been for so long a period of my life acting with a minority, and I even now so often find myself identified with them, that my associations and feelings are all the other way.'

Great increase of persons who think upon and take an active part in politics, and great rise into political power of merchants, manufacturers, and persons raised into consequence by the increasing trade, &c., of the country. Extreme importance that correct notions should be formed by such persons, and that they should not immediately think that nothing is so easy as to reform the system and to exclude every evil which has heretofore been admitted.

Great reason against reform that it will be found not to be attended with any of the benefits expected from it, and then more and more will be required, the original argument against any innovation will be lost, and the constitution will be destroyed. This the more to be feared, considering the opinions which have been broached upon the subject—dividing the country into districts, excluding Ministers from the House of Commons.

I anticipate the total destruction of freedom of speech from a reformation of the Parliament, and for this reason. The present House, knowing that there are popular, plausible, and *primâ facie* objections to its formation, will endure to hear its conduct arraigned and condemned, because it does not wish to stir dangerous questions; but a House of Commons elected according to what is called theory and principle will never bear to hear itself freely and violently censured, though its acts may possibly be such as to deserve the most acrimonious censure.

Draw the distinction between a man of Parliamentary influence and promoting liberally a system of right opinions, and one who brings them down in a phalanx to impose his demands, &c., taking advantage of the weakness of a Ministry. This is a great evil—about

counterbalanced upon the whole by the advantage [of a permanent majority]; and should we get rid of it by reform? Combinations for the same purpose would take place.

Advantageous to have persons in Parliament who act from private interest. Merchants, for instance, who support or approve measures inasmuch as they promote or interfere with their commercial views are excited to a degree of exertion and industry which throws great light upon the measures themselves, and to which men are never stimulated by mere dictates of duty. Cold and negligent attendance and attention of persons who are popularly chosen. . . . Best founded complaint against the present House of Commons—non-attendance.

He also notices as a strange inconsistency that Lord John Russell, who moved the disfranchisement of corrupt boroughs in 1819, should be member for the pocket borough of Tavistock, and in 1822 expresses himself as unable to vote for going into Committee unless the full details of the plan are laid before the House, and it is understood that the extreme reformers, like Burdett, pledge themselves to abide by it.

When Canning, on the illness of Lord Liverpool in 1827, was summoned to form a Ministry, William Lamb was once more out of Parliament, having retired from a contest at Hertford in 1825, because he found that the electors preferred the uncompromising Radicalism and irresponsible demagoguism of Tom Duncombe, who did not hesitate to import into the struggle the misfortunes of his adversary's private life. However, a seat was speedily found for him at Newport, Isle of Wight, in lieu of the Premier, and he was appointed Irish Secretary, taking his seat for Bletchingley, where Mr. William Russell retired in his favour.[1] For some reason he did not start for Ireland until the beginning of July, and in less than a month Canning was dead. Their correspondence accordingly was limited, and all

[1] He was returned for Newport on April 24, and for Bletchingley on May 7.

that has been preserved is a brief note from Canning telling the Chief Secretary to number his letters, and so to give them an appearance, if not a reality, of method. News of the national loss was promptly transmitted to Lamb by the Home Secretary, Lord Lansdowne.

Secret and confidential. London, August 8, 1827.

POOR Canning expired between three and four this morning. I write in great haste, having been to Windsor to notify the event. The K. is much affected by the event, was very gracious, but told me he had not made up his mind how to act. He would in the course of another day explain himself on paper. He has since sent for Goderich and S. Bourne.

You shall hear from me when things assume a more decisive tone. Poor Mrs. C. is, I am afraid, in a dreadful state. He was occupied to the last with a paper respecting Portugal, a very able one, communicated to us all, and kept referring to it when he could no longer command his thoughts in words.

Lord Goderich undertook to carry on the Government, and under his somewhat lax *régime* a series of Ministerial crises promptly ensued, which were actively fomented by the King. William Lamb transmitted an account of one of them to his chief, Lord Wellesley:—

William Lamb to the Marquess Wellesley. September 2 [1827].

I SEND you the only letter I have received; though it comes from a lady (my sister-in-law, Mrs. G. Lamb), it seems founded on very good authority. Certainly the King is a most unaccountable man. If he means to break up the Ministry, why does he not do it? If he wishes to keep them together, why does he make petty difficulties? If Herries is to be sacrificed, to which it seems difficult how either the King or Lord Goderich can consent, it

would appear as if no impediment were left to a settlement; and yet impediments appear to exist.[1]

Meanwhile William Lamb had settled down to his work, and was proving himself a very efficient Chief Secretary. For in spite of his outward show of indifference he had a high ideal of statesmanship.[2] With Catholic Emancipation an open question in the Cabinet, it was obviously not a time for heroic measures; and the period of Lamb's residence at Dublin is not one of importance in Irish history. He even found it hopeless to stop the Government subsidies to newspapers, or to reform the magistracy. He was placed at an additional disadvantage from the fact that Lord Wellesley, always a difficult man, was utterly weary of an office which had failed to bring him an addition of reputation, and eager to be gone. His lieutenant was anxious to avoid posing as a power behind the throne, and cautioned Lord Lansdowne against assigning to the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant any separate authority. Always abhorrent of extremes, Mr. Lamb deplored alike the exuberant pride of the Orangemen and the turmoil created by the Catholic Association; but he was accessible to all, and invited to his table not only members of the old Irish Opposition like Grattan and Curran, but—and it was considered a great innovation—Roman Catholics as well, while at the house of Mr. Crampton he had a full conversation with Sheil upon the agrarian disturbances which desolated parts of the country.[3]

[1] Mr. Herries, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was accused of intriguing to overthrow the Ministry and get rid of the Whig alliance. But Mr. Edward Herries, in his Memoir of his father's public life, has made out a very good case in his favour.

[2] For instance, when Lord Dudley consulted him as to whether he ought to accept office, Lamb told him that he must be prepared, 'in the first place, to bear every species of abuse and misrepresentation, and the imputation of the most sordid and interested motives; in the second place, to go through with it if you undertake it, and not to be dispirited by any difficulties or annoyances you may find in the office, and which you may depend upon it no office is free from' (quoted in Lord Dudley's *Letters to Bishop Coplestone*).

[3] These statements are summarised from Mr. Torrens's chapters on Lamb's Chief Secretaryship, in which the information is especially full and important. From O'Connell's *Correspondence* it may be gathered that

Mr. Lamb's tenure of office was of value, then, chiefly for the official experience which he acquired, and which was afterwards to bear such good fruit at the Home Office. Mr. Torrens quotes a long memorandum, dated September 19, dealing with the varied subjects of Jury Bills, Criminal Law, Public Works, Tolls and Customs, the Magistracy, Tithe, Education, and so forth. It is a careful paper, and shows a grasp alike of general principles and of detail. He is anxious that 'with respect to any reformation of the law generally Ireland should follow England at a certain distance of time, for the sake of greater experience and greater maturity of legislation;' he desires that a systematic plan may be provided against the mismanagement and abuse of relief grants to the suffering population; he is fully conscious of the difficulties imposed by religious jealousies in the way of a general scheme of education. Other memorandums followed, but as copies of them have not been preserved their purport must be collected from Lord Lansdowne's replies.

Lord Lansdowne to the Right Hon. W. Lamb. October 3, 1827.

It was useless for me to say anything respecting some points on which you expressed naturally an anxiety to be informed when I last heard from you till I had an opportunity for conversing with Goderich and Lord Anglesey.[1] You shall now be put in possession of all that I know connected with Irish arrangements. First, as to the interregnum. Lord Anglesey will be prepared to commence his Viceroyalty with the New Year, so that it cannot be very long. Exactly how long will depend upon Lord Wellesley, who made, it seems, a particular request to Canning that he should retain the appointment until the end of the year, but that he should come away before, and not immediately transfer the Government in person to a new Viceroy. His coming away, therefore, before Christmas if he chooses cannot be objected to.

the Chief Secretary was looked upon with great favour by the Liberator, who hoped that he would 'un-Orange Ireland,' and was anxious to secure his return for Dublin.

[1] Lord Anglesey was the destined successor of Lord Wellesley.

Second, as to Gregory.[1] We are all agreed that it is desirable he should be removed, but in a way that shall be both civil in manner and satisfactory in substance. As, judging from your letter, you are on good terms with him, you can have no difficulty in ascertaining how he is circumstanced, and what provision would best suit him. Goderich thinks there is no harm in granting a pension analogous to that which would exist with respect to an Under-Secretary. But, if no other way can be suggested, he would have no difficulty in submitting the case to Parliament, as he has served much longer than under the law here would entitle him in a parallel case to a pension. Anything you can propose for this purpose will be attended to with a desire to give it immediate effect, as Lord A. is anxious that the arrangement should take effect as soon as he goes, if not before, and C. Grant[2] says that G. must in your case, as he found in his, remain master of the whole machine of Government when you are absent.

Third, as to Gregory's successor. I have strongly urged that it is, if not a matter of right, a matter of expediency that the selection should in the first instance be with you, which is fully agreed to by Lords Anglesey and Goderich; with the understanding, of course, that you will communicate with us before the appointment is actually made, in case anything should occur for consideration or discussion, which will be the more necessary as the individual, whoever he may be, must, or at least, without some strong reason to the contrary, ought to, remain with your successor.

Fourth, an unexpected obstacle has sprung up with

[1] Mr. Gregory, the Under-Secretary, was unpopular with the Catholics on account of his Orange leanings.

[2] Charles Grant, afterwards Lord Glenelg, had been appointed Irish Secretary in 1819. He was then President of the Board of Trade.

respect to the Chancellor. Alexander (though no such inference is to be drawn from his letter to Goderich, which I have seen), I have just ascertained, positively means to ask for a peerage before he goes, and to refuse to go without one. It will, and I think ought to be, refused; but the case is embarrassing, as he appears to be the person who best fulfils all the conditions required.[1]

Fifth, the Commandership-in-Chief is not settled. Murray must come away for reasons (not political) which will readily occur to you. Lord A. would be glad to unite both in his own person, but I conclude this will not be thought right. Sir J. Byng is a candidate, and (judging from his conduct in the north) a good one.

The chief event of the autumn was the destruction of the Turkish fleet by Admiral Codrington at Navarino, on which 'untoward event' Lord Palmerston, the Secretary at War, sent William Lamb some amusing comments:—

Stanhope Street. November 15, 1827.

I ARRIVED here on Monday, and I have communicated with Goderich and Lansdowne on the several points which you spoke to me about. With respect to the Association Act, Lansdowne says he is waiting for some promised and elaborate communication on that subject from Lord Wellesley, who has undertaken to give him fully and at length his whole views upon that matter. Perhaps his communication is more likely to come *at length* than to be very full when it does come; but at all events Lansdowne seems to wish that the question should be brought before the Government by some representation from your side of the water.

[1] Sir A. Hart was ultimately appointed, Plunket being passed over, much to his chagrin, owing to the hostility of the King.

As to Anglesey's arrival, that, I think, seems not likely to take place as early as you would wish. He has stated himself ready to go at any time between the 8th and the 14th of January, unless the Cabinet should think it of material consequence that he should go sooner. He is at the present moment evidently suffering much under his old complaint,[1] and was yesterday in much pain during the meeting of the Cabinet, and did not dine with Goderich afterwards.

When Parliament will meet it is not easy at present to foretell. The latter end of January is the time now talked of as that at which the state of our account at our bankers will render it necessary that Parliament should meet, but it is possible that the turn of affairs in the East may require a meeting at an earlier time, though I think this is less probable than it was two days ago. The mere circumstance of our having made a bonfire of the fleet of our good ally at Navarino is not deemed a reason for assembling Parliament, because this was not a declaration of war but only a slight act of remonstrance struck parenthetically into unbroken friendship; but it was thought possible that the Turk might, upon hearing of this friendly liberty, through his barbarous ignorance of civilised usages, have taken unfounded offence, and, like an ill-bred fellow, have declared war against those allies who, as Codrington says in one of his resolutions, were doing all these things '*evidently to the advantage of the Porte itself*.' We, however, received yesterday a despatch from Wellesley[2] at Vienna, stating that Metternich, though he had only been married three hours, had sent for Wellesley to say

[1] Lord Anglesey was a martyr to neuralgia.

[2] This is Sir Henry Wellesley, a brother of the Duke of Wellington, afterwards the first Baron Cowley. He was Minister at Vienna from 1823 to 1831.

that he had received from the Sultan a request for the intervention of Austria between Turkey and the Allies, with an assurance that Turkey was prepared to concede even more than the Allies asked. At the date of this despatch from Vienna Metternich had heard of the battle of Navarino, but of course the account of it had not reached Constantinople when the application was sent off to Austria. If, however, the Sultan was disposed to yield before the smash of his fleet, I cannot suppose that this disaster, so signal and complete, could inspire him with additional hopes of successful resistance; and consequently, whether we accept the proffered mediation of Austria, or on the other hand reply that if the Turk means to do what we ask he can just as well say so in Turkish as in German, in either case I think we may consider the matter as settled, and that no meeting of Parliament will be necessary on account of affairs in the Levant. You will, of course, consider this last statement of the proffered mediation as most strictly confidential.

Lansdowne has proposed a grand reduction of British Yeomanry from 24,000 to 6,000 men, and from 130,000*l.* to 40,000*l.* The proposition is so expedient and wise that I have no doubt of its being agreed to, and in that case no time will be lost in carrying it into effect. The principle upon which the measure proceeds is to continue the Yeomanry in the manufacturing and mining districts where their services have been required during the last ten years, or where there is reason to think that their existence may have tended to preserve tranquillity, and to disband them in all the agricultural counties where they have never been called out, and are never likely to be wanted, at least in *time of peace*. When this arrangement is executed, I hope you will be

prepared to make us a present of your Irish Yeomanry, the disbandment of which would probably be a good measure both in economy and in politics.

Lord Lansdowne to the Right Hon. W. Lamb. Secret and confidential. Whitehall, November 16, 1827.

I WRITE more for the purpose of acknowledging your letter of the 11th, and one without a date I received immediately before, than of answering them, for on some of the most material subjects you have reverted to I could hardly venture to give an opinion, and certainly could give none that would be satisfactory to you without having a full communication with Goderich and Huskisson,[1] and you may easily believe from recent events that their thoughts and time are too much absorbed with foreign politics to allow of any long deliberation on other matters.

Feeling with you all the inconvenience of giving any fresh impulse to the theological movements in all directions, I should perhaps be disposed to prefer that course with respect to the grants if there were any such which would for the present escape observation, but after all that is passed, whether continued, added to, or withdrawn, they will not fail to attract attention and render declaration of opinions necessary, and the views of Government must be stated. The Moderators of the Synod have been with me this week to represent the Presbyterian feeling to be strongly in favour of the Belfast Institution, although the majority of that body are as much opposed to the alleged heterodox opinions of some of the Professors as Messrs. Foster and Glassford; and I think there is a mode by which the Church of England might be effectually reconciled to such a grant as is desired, and which I do consider to be

[1] Mr. Huskisson was Colonial Secretary.

a very advantageous mode of establishing a strong link between the Government and one of the most powerful conductors, if I mistake not, of public feeling and opinion.

Upon this and other matters arising out of the state of the laws as to societies and processions I will write a few days hence more fully, when I have conversed with our friends. With respect to the Catholics, I should certainly conceive that beyond great attention and civility all intercourse of opinion should be avoided. For myself at least (but my situation is perhaps somewhat peculiar from having been requested twice to present their petitions) I am most anxious to have it in my power to say that I have neither directly nor indirectly given nor authorised any advice as to their moving or withholding proceedings in the next session. I am sure it is the most correct course, in a case where advice either way would be liable to such obvious misrepresentations in different quarters. Let us be responsible, as we must be, for our own conduct upon their question when it presents itself, but not for the consequences which must attend either too much or too little activity in passing it. Who can undertake to pilot without knowing in what direction the port really lies?

Your account of Hart is very satisfactory. Many accidents seem to have conspired to give him a début under favourable auspices, and even his quarrel, in a country where no man is permitted to be well with everybody, will not be without its use in setting up his character. You have probably heard from others what I have great pleasure in repeating to you, that Huskisson is considerably and decidedly better within the last four weeks. I can hardly say how much I value *him*, and how satisfactory our intercourse has *hitherto* been.

The last accounts from Constantinople are of a more pacific character than any we have had, and the Court of V., which is much inclined to meddle, begins now to perceive the interest it has in hastening, not delaying, an adjustment.

The same to the same. Private and confidential. Whitehall, November 22, 1827.

SINCE I wrote a few lines to you on Monday, I have had an opportunity of discussing the important subjects referred to in your letters received last week, and more particularly that of the Irish grants, with Goderich and Huskisson.

First, I stated to them the importance which it appears to me attaches to the establishment of some recognised connection between the Government and the Belfast Institution, which I am assured exercises, and will more and more continue to exercise, a most powerful influence on a population so active and intelligent as that of the North of Ireland, and they agree with me in that view. The charge of disloyalty formerly, I believe, urged against them, is abandoned for that of want of orthodoxy (I mean Presbyterian orthodoxy). The representation of the Synod of Ulster conveyed through their Moderators is an answer. There remains the difficulty which you have very justly suggested of the hostile use which might be made of a new grant to Presbyterians when a resolution is at the same time announced which is supposed to be for the advantage of the Established Church. There appears to me a good solution of it in the evidence of the Bishop of Down, Dr. Mant, who, going as he did from Lambeth to Ireland, is the most unexceptionable authority where its interests are concerned, and who proposes, as an arrangement which he should consider as advantageous, the establishment as part of that Institution of a professor of the Church

of England theology. I enclose a copy of his evidence, in case you cannot immediately turn to it. With all our attention to economy, we think a few hundreds more or less no object in such a grant.

Second, the grants to the Kildare Street Society and that for the Suppression of Vice [1] must be diminished, but it would be too strong a measure to discontinue the former or, perhaps, even to diminish it much, without being prepared with a plan of comprehensive education instead. That suggested by the Commissioners does appear for the present to be hopeless, though I have received a letter from Dr. Murray [2] (which I have answered in general terms) stating how desirous the Roman Catholic clergy were to make any concession, if they could be secured against proselytism. The plan that appears to me the most unexceptionable, considering all the difficulties of a general scheme of education, is that of schools in which one day in the week might be set apart for religious instruction to the Protestant children by the clergyman, and another for that of Catholic children by the priest, each using their own Bibles and their own comments, the other days being left for the other purposes of education; but no money to be issued to any school without a certificate from the clergyman and parish priest of the children of their respective flocks having attended their duty in this respect. Might it not dispose Irish of all descriptions who would not like to see the National grants diminished to come into such an arrangement to let them understand that, if it was found practicable, the present grants, not being found to answer their intended

[1] The Kildare Place Society and the Society for Discountenancing Vice were too fond of proselytising in the interests of the *Establishment*.

[2] The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

object with respect to the community in general, must be reduced?

We are perfectly aware that the Association Bill expires in the spring. Its warmest friends can hardly contend that it has been found effectual or even useful. We are much inclined to trust to the powers of the law as it stood, vigorously enforced both against processions and meetings of a dangerous character, and if it fails, to proceed to any enactment that may be necessary on that ground.

On all these points, if you wish for Cabinet opinion you must send over a regular despatch which can be laid before them, but in the meantime you may, I think, consider this letter as expressing Lord Goderich's and Huskisson's opinion as much as my own.

We are in daily and anxious expectation of news from Constantinople. Byng will, I think, be your Commander-in-Chief, but not yet settled.

Early in December Lords Justices were appointed, and about the middle of the month Lord Wellesley took his departure. Lamb remained at his post, and carried on the government of the country. Meanwhile the Government was fast breaking up, and the crisis alluded to in the following letter was followed by Lord Goderich's actual resignation on January 8, 1828.

Lord Lansdowne to the Right Hon. W. Lamb. Secret. Whitehall, December 20, 1827.

I AM obliged to you for all you mention about Lord W., which it certainly is material to be apprised of, particularly at the present juncture. I shall communicate your letter with strict confidence to Goderich and Huskisson. I conclude that he is by this time embarked or embarking for England.

Although you must have discredited all the rumours and exaggerations propagated by the press of what has been passing here, you must, I am sure,

have been satisfied that some occurrence of no ordinary nature had taken place, and may be glad to know the real state of things. The beginning of last week G., under the sudden influence of feelings which, perhaps, you may know enough of his domestic interior to understand, annexed to a letter on other important matter, of which Huskisson and I were aware, expressions about himself unknown to us, which, though certainly not a resignation in terms, were considered equivalent to it by the K., who sent for H[s] [Herries] under the idea that it was necessary to look out for a successor. He would not hear of quitting his retirement, and G., recovered from the impression of the moment, which was not connected in the slightest degree with political differences (none such really existing), is as ready to continue as the K. is to continue him, though it cannot be denied an unlucky impression has been occasioned by the reports to which [such] a step, promulgated as it was sure to be even where it ought to be kept most secret, could not fail to give rise.

Huskisson has shown in this transaction, as well as in all the intercourse I have daily had with him, a degree of frankness, sensibility, and ability which make it most [pleasant to act with him].

Lamb was invited by the Duke of Wellington, the new Prime Minister, to continue at his post, and replied by asking to be allowed to delay his decision until he had conversed with the Duke upon the whole of the intended arrangements, and upon the proposed course of measures. He left Ireland, accordingly, on January 23, 1828, and ultimately consented to follow the example of his Canningite friends, Huskisson, Charles Grant, Lord Palmerston, and Lord Dudley, and to remain in office. Lord Brougham notes the anomaly of his position, in that he was the only politician of the Whig connection in the new Government; but Lord Melbourne was throughout his life

a man who cared for facts much more than names, and was, in all probability, not much affected by the circumstance. In any case, his connection with the Duke's Government was short. In March came the erratic voting of the Canningites on the East Retford Bill, Huskisson's hasty resignation, and its prompt acceptance by the Prime Minister.[1] Lamb, though he had voted with the Government, determined to resign with his friends, in spite of a special request from the King that he would remain in office, because, as he wrote in a memorandum, which Greville saw at Brocket after his death, but which has since disappeared, 'he had always thought that it was more necessary to stand by his friends when they were in the wrong than when in the right.' Years afterwards he discussed the matter with Lord Brougham.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Brougham. Windsor Castle, November 2, 1833.

IN the five hundred and forty-sixth page of the second volume of the publication of your lordship's speeches, with historical introductions, I find the following passage:—

'Lord Dudley and Mr. Huskisson, with the lesser members of the party, Lords Palmerston, Melbourne, and Glenelg, were once more in opposition,[2] and gradually assumed the Whig connection, but their hostility to reform remained unabated. Nor is it one of the least remarkable events in their history that to a reform question they owed the last misfortune of losing their places in 1828. They had taken the long-headed, not to say crafty, view of their new leader, Mr. Huskisson, that giving members to Birmingham, on the disfranchisement of East Retford for corruption, would tend more to prevent further mischief—that is, as he explained it, really effectual reform—than

[1] Readers of Bulwer's *Life of Palmerston* will remember Lord Palmerston's capital description of the Canningite council of war.

[2] These letters were written during their temporary estrangement, hence their formality, and Lord Brougham's careful enumeration of 'the lesser members of the party.'

merely opening the franchise to the adjoining hundreds,' &c., &c.

This passage appears to me very unjust towards others. With respect to myself I beg leave to represent to your lordship that, if it does not assert a fact, it affords strong ground for an inference contrary to the truth, and it makes a most unfounded conjecture with respect to the state of my opinions at that period. In the division which led to the retirement from the Government of Mr. Huskisson and others I voted with the Ministry of which I formed a part. I voted against Mr. Huskisson; and I only resigned my office because those with whom I had accepted it, and in whom I placed my confidence, withdrew from his Majesty's service. With respect to the view which I had taken of the giving members to Birmingham on the disfranchisement of East Retford, I have publicly declared in your lordship's hearing that it was always my opinion that those limited measures would not have produced their intended effect, and that the question lay between a firm adherence to the then existing Constitution and a reformation as extensive as that which has taken place.

The same to the same. Windsor Castle, November 7, 1838.

I AM very much obliged to you for your letter. I knew that you neither could nor did intend to misrepresent. The circumstance of my votes upon these subjects having always been given in silence and without any explanation sufficiently accounts for your not having been aware of them; but the fact is, I never was for any of those schemes. I never thought they would answer.

I never took the view which you *call long-headed*

and crafty, but which appears to me neither the one nor the other—not long-headed because short-sighted, and not crafty because neither intended nor calculated to deceive. My opinion was then against reform altogether, and chiefly because I thought that it could not be moderate or limited. The adoption of any of the partial measures proposed seemed to me certain to hasten and advance its progress, because they both admitted the existence of the disease and the propriety of its remedy. Perhaps it signifies very little what I thought then or what I did; at the same time, a book written by you will be considered hereafter conclusive evidence of the actual conduct of your contemporaries and colleagues, and therefore, if without giving it too much importance you can take a natural opportunity of setting this matter right, I shall feel it a kindness. Be assured that I never attributed this statement to bitterness arising from anything which has lately taken place; and with respect to your other general remarks, although I cannot admit their justice, I feel them to be made not in an unfair spirit, nor in a tone of unkindness and discourtesy.

Despite numerous overtures from the Duke the Canningites entered into a close alliance with the Whigs, and acted cordially with them during the momentous sessions which followed. Lord Melbourne, as we may now call him—for his father's death in July 1828 had raised him to the peerage—took no part in the debates on the Relief Bill, but in a thoughtful speech on the precedent measure, the Bill for the suppression of the Association, he warned the House against the futility of such legislation unless accompanied by concessions. After his rupture with the ultra-Tories the Duke's advances to the Canningites were still more frequent, but as may be seen from the following letter, written ten days before the railway accident which killed Mr. Huskisson, their temper was by no means conciliatory :—

Mr. Huskisson to Lord Melbourne. Liverpool, September 13 [1830].

I RECEIVED the enclosed from Brougham yesterday,[1] with the request that I would put it into your hands as soon as I could. I was very sorry to learn from Birch that I have no chance of doing so here, and not less sorry to find that you are prevented coming by indisposition. I hope this will find you quite recovered.

The great Captain comes here to-morrow, and great are the preparations for his reception. The feelings are not confidence in, or admiration of, his political character, but rather that of awe at the man that subdued Bonaparte and forced the Catholic question. It is the Indian worshipping the Devil, because he is not conscious where he shall find a protecting deity.

The Duke is in his usual good luck in respect to the state of the county which he is now visiting. Nothing can be more satisfactory than the present state of manufactures and trade, and the feeling is general that its present healthy condition is likely to be permanent.

We shall see whether he takes to himself the credit of all this. But at all events he has the benefit of it.

After Mr. Huskisson's death the Canningites were even more unwilling than before to trust themselves to the Duke, and when in the following month the Tory Government was overthrown, their alliance with the Whigs was indissolubly complete.

[1] A paper on the state of affairs. See Lord Melbourne's letter to Brougham, quoted in the latter's *Life and Times*, vol. iii. pp. 66, 67.

CHAPTER V

AT THE HOME OFFICE

1830–1834

On the formation of the Reform Cabinet Lord Melbourne was appointed Home Secretary, his acquaintance with Irish affairs being probably the reason for his nomination to that particular office. He immediately gave evidence of great administrative abilities. Even Greville soon altered his first opinion, 'Melbourne too idle,' and became quite enthusiastic in his favour. 'He has surprised all about him by a sudden display of activity and vigour, rapid and diligent transaction of business, for which nobody was prepared.' Certainly his hands were full enough, for both the manufacturing North and the agricultural South were within measurable distance of revolution.

The following letters, which have been selected from hundreds of a similar character, give an idea of the nature of the disturbances in Lancashire and Northumberland, and of the Home Secretary's method of meeting them:—

Lord Melbourne to Wm. Hulton, Esq., of Hulton Park. South Street, Grosvenor Square, December 30, 1830.

I ENTIRELY agree with you that 'no military force can prevail against the secret councils and the funds of the Union.' This combination, or rather conspiracy, is an evil of a different nature, and requires another remedy, which it is difficult to discover and apply, but to devising which I may say, being very desirous at the same time of not exciting very sanguine expectations, the best attention of the Government will be directed. But when I wrote to you my former letter

the proceedings which had taken place at Ashton, Stayleybridge, and elsewhere in that neighbourhood seemed to indicate that the Union were fast abandoning their system of secret councils, and were resorting to open violence and undisguised insurrection. To force nothing but force can be successfully opposed, and it is at once evident that all legislation is impotent and ridiculous unless the public peace can be preserved, and the liberty and property of individuals secured from outrage and invasion. Since that period the accounts which we have received have assumed a more favourable character, at least as far as respects the apprehension of immediate disturbance, for I am well aware that even if tranquillity shall be apparently restored it can only be for a time, and that the state of the manufacturing districts of Lancashire is such as to afford ground for the most serious uneasiness and anxiety. Under these circumstances and at this time, when it appears to me that the only safe course is to combine and unite the friends of liberty and order against their enemies, I am sorry to learn from your letter that there is so little prospect of being able to form a local force which can be depended upon. I learn that the Lord Lieutenant has called meetings of the magistracy in the respective hundreds, which is in accordance with your opinion; but I should hope that the gentlemen who inhabit the agricultural parts of the county will become sensible of the state of the manufacturing districts, which, if they do not advert to it in time, will undoubtedly press itself upon their attention in a shape and form which cannot be disregarded.

Lord Melbourne to the Earl of

I HAVE no doubt that your lordship acted discreetly in suppressing my letter of the 1st inst.

Derby. Private and confidential. Home Office, January 11, 1831.

Nothing is more to be avoided at all times, but more particularly in times like these, than the giving of offence to those upon whom you must after all rely for support and assistance; and I am very sorry to learn from your lordship's communication, as well as from other quarters, that there does remain upon the minds of the magistrates of Lancashire a sore and bitter remembrance of what took place in 1819, which prevents them from giving that earnest and active assistance which otherwise might have been expected from them. I should have hoped that, even if the lapse of time had not been sufficient to have effaced impressions of this character, they would at once have yielded to the evident dictates of duty and to the sense, which all must entertain, of the exigencies of the present period. Although I entirely approve of the discretion exercised by your lordship with respect to my letter of the 1st inst., you will, of course, understand me as not retracting any of the opinions expressed in it. The two remedies of which the resolutions of the magistrates demand the application are new laws and a large military force. With respect to the first, I have the authority of Mr. Lister, the stipendiary magistrate at Manchester, expressed in a recent letter, for asserting that many of the evils arise not so much from the inadequacy of the law as from the difficulty of enforcing it; and as for the second, you must be aware that it can be employed only for a time, that it can produce but a partial and uncertain tranquillity, and that after all it is a most unsatisfactory way of maintaining order and preserving the public peace. Surely, it is a disgrace that the great county of Lancashire, with its opulent, populous, and commercial cities, with its numerous nobility and gentry, with its

respectable and enlightened inhabitants of every description, agricultural, manufacturing, and mercantile, should be unable to enforce the law within its own limits or to prevent the establishment of a democratic tyranny such as is described in the letters which I have had the honour of receiving from your lordship. What is the cause of this state of things? Is the magistracy defective? Is there a want of union between the landed gentry and the manufacturers, or amongst the manufacturers themselves? Are these disturbances and attacks upon machinery encouraged by some of the masters whose interest it is that improved machinery which is being erected, to the prejudice, of course, of their inferior factories, should be destroyed? All these causes have been suggested to me, and I should be anxious to profit by your lordship's superior information upon these subjects so far as to learn whether all or any of them be well founded. If your lordship should be of opinion that any names should be added to the magistracy, and will have the goodness to suggest them, I have no doubt that the Chancellor of the Duchy will without delay insert them in the commission. It appears from a letter from Mr. Hoxton (?) received this day that, since the atrocious murder of Mr. Ashton, there does appear a disposition amongst the master manufacturers of Ashton, Stayleybridge, &c., &c., to unite and take measures for the protection of their persons and property. It would have been well if this had been done before; not that I mean to infer that any precautions would have prevented the horrible catastrophe which has taken place, but I cannot forget that some of those gentlemen have not only been unwilling to take precautionary measures, but have gone so far as to prohibit their workmen from coming

forward and giving evidence against the agents of the Union who had intimidated persons from entering their mills at a rate of wages which was denounced by that society. I trust that those persons are at length convinced that such conduct, whether arising from the base motive of timidity or the baser motive of self-interest, can neither answer the one purpose nor the other, can neither assure their personal safety nor the preservation of that property for the augmentation of which they are ready to sacrifice the principles both of probity and of patriotism. Every means should be taken upon the part of your lordship and other gentlemen of property to further and encourage this first appearance of an intention to act upon a liberal system and with a determined spirit. I enclose a copy of a letter from Mr. Hoxton, which appears to me to prove that the existing law may be enforced, that if enforced it would be sufficient for its purpose, and also to afford a hope that even amongst the workmen themselves there might, by proper exertion and right representations, be excited a disposition to resist the mandates of that society which appears hitherto to have exercised over them so arbitrary and despotic a dominion. I have no doubt that your lordship will use every exertion yourself for this purpose, and that you will do your utmost to inspire a proper spirit of exertion into all the magistrates and persons of influence in the county.

Lord Melbourne to the Duke of Northumberland. Private and confidential. Home Office, May 21, 1831.

It is with great regret that I learn from your Grace's letter of this morning, and from the communication from the Mayor of Newcastle enclosed in it, that the disputes between the coal-owners and the pitmen in that part of the country are so far from being accommodated

that they appear to increase both in violence and extent, and to embrace within their operation other trades and employments and to threaten the most serious consequences. I also learn from the other quarters that there is a great want of system and concert amongst the magistrates, and it is reported to me, I know not with what truth, that some who are in the commission for the county of Durham have acted with great indiscretion and irresolution, and in such a manner as rather to foment and encourage than to repress and terminate tumult and disorder.

The same to the same. Confidential. Home Office, May 23, 1831.

It has appeared to me, in the course of the correspondence which has taken place, that there does exist a jealousy and an opposition between the magistrates and the coal-agents, which is prejudicial to the public service, and that if they could be induced to act together with more cordiality and unity of purpose there would be a better chance of bringing the affair to a speedy and successful termination.

A letter from the First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir James Graham, to Lord Melbourne, completes the view of the North.

Private. Carlisle, Sunday, three o'clock.

I arrived here half an hour ago, and I am happy to inform you that since Thursday night there have been no more burnings, and the city has been tolerably quiet. The account sent to you yesterday will have informed you of the extent of the Finsmoor riots; to-day I send you a copy of the information of an approver. I am happy to say that one of the incendiaries is in the county gaol, and a hot pursuit of the other is in progress. The civil power has been tardily and insufficiently exerted; and yesterday, when

one of the warrants was executed in the suburbs of the city, the military were under arms and in attendance, although no resistance had been offered to the special constables. I shall attend, however, a meeting of the magistrates to-morrow, and I shall also see Sir Hew Ross, who commands the garrison here, and I hope to make a better arrangement, whereby this needless use of military force may be avoided.

Your circular to the magistrates in the disturbed districts has not been sent to this county. I think it wanted here; and your circular to the Lord Lieutenants would do no harm.

Your promised reward on the conviction of incendiaries is confined to the six counties specified. Do you not think it right to extend this offer to all counties where wilful firing shall take place?

In the South the state of affairs was even more alarming. Gangs of labourers, in Hampshire 1,500 strong, moved through the country, destroying machinery, burning farm-buildings, and levying contributions. Lord Melbourne at once set himself to meet the disorder. Acting in concert with the authorities at the War Office, Lord Hill and Lord Fitzroy Somerset, he marched troops into the disturbed districts; and on December 18 a Special Commission met at Winchester to try the rioters in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Herts, and Wiltshire, before which no fewer than 1,000 individuals were brought to justice.

Meanwhile the incendiary orators, Cobbett and Carlisle, were being actively watched, but it was difficult to procure evidence against them.

Lord Melbourne to T. Sanctuary, Esq. Private. January 6, 1831.

I RECEIVED yesterday your letter of the same date, with the enclosures. Nothing is so difficult to prove as the utterance of words, so that it might be very difficult to found a prosecution upon any proof which could now be obtained; at the same time it would be of considerable importance

to obtain such proof, as it would throw new light upon the character and proceedings of the individual in question (Cobbett).

I highly approve of the project you communicated to me, of having the state of the county minutely examined and inquired into by a committee of gentlemen of the county. I am convinced that an immediate investigation into the abuses of parochial administration, and a redress of them according to the present law, would do at least as much to relieve and satisfy the country as any new law that can be passed. But such an inquiry and such measures must be conducted on sound and enlightened principles, or they may aggravate the evils instead of removing them. The great errors which have been committed in the administration of the poor laws are the paying of the wages of labour out of the poor rate, and the making a difference between the rates of relief afforded to married and single men in favour of the former. These two mistakes have become, I fear, inveterate throughout the county of Sussex and many of the neighbouring counties, and cannot, perhaps, be immediately corrected; but no system can be safe or wholesome which has not for its object the entire doing away of both of these practices.

Carlisle was tried at the Old Bailey in January, and sentenced to a fine of 2,000*l.* or two years' imprisonment; but Cobbett, who was not brought to trial until July, escaped, as the jury were unable to agree. He had the effrontery to call Lord Melbourne as a witness on his behalf.

In Sussex rick-burning prevailed; but, though it was almost impossible to catch the malefactors, Lord Melbourne would have nothing to do with an *agent provocateur*, and rebuked an over-zealous magistrate who suggested that an informer should be employed, who should ingratiate himself with the incendiaries by setting fire to two of the magistrate's own hayricks.

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Henry Drummond. Confidential. South Street, January 23, 1831.

I HAVE considered your letter of the day before yesterday, and cannot help submitting to you some observations upon its contents and suggestions. The danger of employing spies and accomplices has always been found to be that, in order to further their own ends, satisfy their employers, and forward their own interests and maintain their credit, they are too apt, first, to bring forward false accusations; secondly, to excite and encourage to the commission of crimes, in order that they may have the honour of informing against and detecting them; and I beg leave to recall upon this subject to your recollection the transactions of the year 1817, when there is too much reason to suspect that the rising in Derbyshire, which cost the lives of three men upon the scaffold and the transportation of many more, was stimulated, if not produced, by the artifices of Oliver, a spy employed by the Government of that day. If Cumber[1] should be employed in the way in which you describe, and if his representation should be either false or exaggerated, I cannot help fearing that the strong interest which he will be under to support his own story and fulfil his own undertaking may possibly lead to similar results. I make no apology for bringing before you this view of the subject, as I am sure you must feel that in our anxiety to discover the perpetrators of these most dangerous and atrocious acts we should run as little risk as possible of involving innocent persons in accusations, and still less of adopting measures which may encourage the seduction of persons, now innocent, into the commission of crime.

Meanwhile the introduction and rejection of the Reform Bill

[1] The informer in question, who was undergoing sentence at Brixton.

had caused a considerable increase of activity among the political unions which, beginning with Birmingham, had sprung up in all the large towns. The King was naturally alarmed, and through his secretary, Sir Herbert Taylor, entered into a correspondence with Lord Melbourne

Lord Melbourne to Sir Herbert Taylor. South Street, September 24, 1831.

I RECEIVED your letter yesterday evening, and I wish I could say in reply to it that the information which has been given to his Majesty is not correct. The political unions, as far as I can learn, are undoubtedly extending themselves, increasing their numbers, and completing their arrangements. They are not so numerous as the unions for the purpose of raising wages and regulating trades, from which they are as yet separate and distinct, but in both cases much communication and co-operation takes place by means of delegates between the bodies which are established in different parts of the country. The plans and intentions mentioned in your letter of preserving the public peace but of resisting the payment of taxes are commonly spoken of and agitated amongst them, and confidently given out as intended to be carried into execution.

How far this spirit may be spread, or how deep it may penetrate, or to what extent it may really be acted upon, it is impossible beforehand to estimate or conjecture, but the most serious fears are entertained by many well acquainted with the people of the consequences which would attend the rejection of the measure now before Parliament.[1] As these persons, however,

[1] The allusion evidently is to Francis Place, with whom Lord Melbourne was in frequent communication through George Lamb, now Under-Secretary for Home Affairs, and his private secretary, Thomas Young. (See the passages from Place's MSS. quoted by Mr. Torrens, vol i. pp. 352, 366.)

are in general eager advocates of that measure, and very desirous that it should pass into law, their evidence, though by no means to be rejected, must be received with some allowance, as it may be biassed by their wishes and inclinations. Upon the whole, however, I cannot but look with solicitude and uneasiness to the result of the division upon the second reading. Some demonstrations of popular feeling will probably take place in the form of riot and tumult, but these ebullitions would probably be of little importance compared with those other plans and designs mentioned in your letter.[1] The open meeting of the political unions which do exist, and the formation of others for the purpose of dictating to Parliament, would be a formidable symptom, and any extensive and successful combination for the purpose of resisting the payment of taxes would be a blow levelled at the very existence of all our institutions, and must, in the complicated and artificial state of our society, be attended with the most disastrous consequences.

The same to the same. South Street, September 26, 1831.

THE last letter which I addressed to you, if I remember right upon Saturday, the 24th inst., I wrote in great haste, being anxious to convey through you to his Majesty, as speedily as possible, such information as I possessed upon the subject of his enquiry, and, upon reconsideration of what I then wrote, I am rather fearful that in my haste I omitted some explanations as well as modifications of the statements which I then made.

When we first came into office in November last, the unions of trades in the North of England and in other parts of the country for the purpose of raising

[1] The riots at Bristol were, however, of considerable importance.

wages, etc., and the general union for the same purpose, were pointed out to me by Sir Robert Peel, in a conversation I had with him upon the then state of the country, as the most formidable difficulty and danger with which we had to contend, and it struck me as well as the rest of his Majesty's servants in the same light.

We considered much ourselves, and we consulted much with others, as to whether the arrangements of these unions, their meetings, their communications, or their pecuniary funds, could be reached, or in any way prevented, by any new legal provisions; but it appeared upon the whole impossible to do anything effectual, unless we proposed such measures as would have been a serious infringement upon the constitutional liberties of the country, and to which it would have been impossible to have obtained the consent of Parliament.

In the meantime these unions, although they continued to subsist and to carry on their operations, evidently began of themselves to slacken and to remit some of their energy, and to lose some of their influence. Their attempts at open violence were suppressed by a reasonable display of force and resolution; and the extreme and irremediable loss to which the workmen subject themselves by belonging to them began, and must still continue, to force itself upon their attention by affecting their comforts and even their subsistence.

Some of the men, for instance, refused 25*s.* a week and stood out for 30*s.* Now if a man under these circumstances remains twelve weeks out of work he loses 15*l.* If at the end of the twelve weeks he is obliged to submit, and does not obtain the advance of 5*s.* a week his loss is irretrievable. If he succeeds, he must still labour for more than a year to make up his loss—5*s.* a week for fifty-two weeks amounting only to 13*l.*

This is so clearly a losing game that its disadvantage must in time become obvious to the most vulgar understanding, and even to that which it is still more difficult to convince—namely, to a mind bewildered, heated, and rendered obstinate by violence, prejudice, and passion. In consequence, it is coming to be admitted by the workmen themselves, in their public meetings, that the unions have generally failed, and I feel myself quite persuaded that if a law had been attempted last winter to put them down it would have proved less effectual than the causes which I have already mentioned; the inexpediency of the steps which they were taking would not have been discovered by them, their failure would have been attributed to the law, and the spirit of union would have been encouraged and strengthened instead of being, as it is in some degree, discouraged. The heaviest blow they have received is from having been left to their own course, which has already made to a certain extent, and will every day make more manifest, its intrinsic unreasonableness and absurdity.

At present their language is an admission that their partial and local unions have failed; that in such contests the masters are sure to get the better, and have done so; that they must have a general and national union. But even if they should establish such a general combination and co-operation, the same causes which have baffled them in the one case—namely, the multitude of workmen, the necessity of subsistence, and the consequent competition for employment—will have precisely the same effect in the other.

Now, it must be observed that these unions are far larger, far more extensive, far more numerous, much better disciplined, and urged and instigated by a more pressing and immediate interest than the political

unions. These latter all profess the same object as the trade unions—viz. the protection, as they term it, of the workman, by preventing the undue reduction of wages; but they go further, and avow the ulterior design of a general reformation of the Government.

They have latterly been extending themselves, and they have begun communication by means of delegates; but my information comes upon this subject from eager reformers, who are very anxious to promote their cause by strong representations of the formidable consequences which would result from the failure of that measure.

In Birmingham, the political union is numerous, but it is not looked upon with favour by the more respectable of its inhabitants. It was chiefly set on foot and promoted by Mr. Thomas Attwood, who thinks of nothing but the state of the currency, and whose real object is a bank restriction and an issue of small paper money.[1]

In Manchester and the manufacturing parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire these political unions have not prevailed to the same degree, nor have they the same consistency and popularity, as in Birmingham. In London it exists, but is not as yet formidable. They are established also in many parts of Scotland, but I am not aware in what numbers, or how composed. But whatsoever may be their present state or strength, I feel quite certain that any attempt to put them down by law would only end in giving them consequence and importance, and would perhaps constitute them the acknowledged organs of public feeling, of which at present they

[1] The Birmingham Political Union was formed in the beginning of 1830, while the Tories were still in power, for the purpose of denouncing a metallic currency. Lord Melbourne always disliked Attwood, and when the latter said to him, in 1832, 'If the people do not get their bellyful after this, I shall be torn in pieces,' all the consolation he got was, 'And so much the better. You deserve it.' (Haydon's *Autobiography*, vol. ii.)

are only the symptoms. It is the public feeling which is dangerous, not the political unions. If these latter should adopt any of the measures mentioned in my former letter, such as the resistance of the payment of taxes, unless they are supported by a large proportion of the middle and even of the better classes of society the attempt will be abortive and ridiculous. If they are so supported it is unnecessary to say how critical the state of public affairs will become. It is to prevent and to avert such a crisis that the Reform Bill has been proposed; and the best mode of meeting and foiling these unions is to act by them as we have done by the other unions, which I have before described—not to interfere with them while they confine themselves within the boundary of the law. If we act otherwise we shall only give them strength, and we shall commence an imprudent contest in which we are by no means sure of success, and which to be foiled in might be attended with the greatest danger.

If I hear any more upon these subjects I will take care to make immediate communication. I have written this in great haste, and imperfectly, but I have been anxious to write it in order to explain and to make more clear the substance of my former letter, and also to state my opinion upon the course which ought to be pursued.

The same to the same. Home Office, October 25, 1831.

. . . . I AM extremely concerned to learn from Dorsetshire that the spirit of party, occasioned by the recent election, prevails to such a degree in the yeomanry corps of that county that it is deemed inexpedient to call upon them to act in case of riot, provided the doing so can possibly be avoided.[1] We must not conceal from ourselves

[1] Two troops of Kentish yeomanry actually resigned because their

that the real weakness and inherent vice of all institutions of this nature, from a regiment of volunteers down to a *posse* of special constables, is that, being taken immediately from the body of the people, and not having habits of military obedience, they are in times of strong popular feeling either divided within themselves by discordant opinions, or so possessed and heated with the prevailing popular sentiment, that either they cannot be depended upon for acting at all, or are entirely incapable of conducting themselves with that steadiness, coolness, and impartiality which are so absolutely required in such circumstances.

I am very much afraid that your Birmingham correspondent is too sanguine when he states that the Bill, if reasonably altered, would meet with general approbation. The changes which he suggests might conciliate some who are now alarmed at it, but they would undoubtedly alienate a very large proportion of those who at present profess to approve it. Care should be taken to guard against all fraud and contrivance, either in rating or omitting to rate; but it appears to me that it would be a measure of very doubtful policy to make any alteration in the amount of qualification. It is a very dangerous way of dealing with a nation to attempt to retract that which you have once offered to concede. The principle of one individual being empowered to give a greater number of suffrages according to the amount of his property is, in my opinion, liable to great objection. Property will always possess considerable influence over the votes of others, and it appears to me to be leaning even too much in its favour to give it, in addition to the power which it must naturally exercise, an

commanding officers, Lord Sydney and Lord Winchelsea, had voted against the Reform Bill.

additional direct weight of its own by investing it with the plurality of suffrages. But the consideration which weighs most with me is, that such an arrangement leads to the result of a majority being openly and manifestly out-voted by a minority; a result which strikes me as totally opposed to the real principles of popular voting, and calculated to lose all the advantages derived from popular institutions, and which mainly consist in the contentment, acquiescence, and satisfaction derived from the consciousness felt by the people that they either watch over their own interests, or have each of them an equal voice in nominating those whom they trust with that duty.

Earl Grey to Lord Melbourne. East Sheen, November 16, 1831.

I HAVE been thinking a great deal about this Birmingham Union. The sort of organisation which is now proposed is not calculated for the discussion of public questions or for petitions upon them. It is of a military character, for active purposes, now alleged to be for the preservation of the public peace, but easily convertible to any other objects. Unarmed as a body, they possess arms as individuals, and being previously formed into companies and regiments and divisions under the name of tithings, &c., they may at any moment appear as an armed and disciplined force. The danger of this I need not point out to you. The question is, how to deal with it? And I cannot help thinking that the proceeding, of which we are expecting an account from Birmingham, cannot be sanctioned by the law. I wish you would have a case *immediately* drawn up upon Mr. Lawley's letter, and the opinion of the Attorney- and Solicitor-General taken upon it, that we may have it when the Cabinet meets on this subject. You will, of

course, bring under their notice the facility with which a body so organised, though not with arms in the first instance, may become an armed force.

Lord Melbourne to Sir H. Taylor. Home Office, November 24, 1831.

I BEG you will return to his Majesty my humble thanks for the communication of the letter from Colonel Wood, which agrees with the accounts which I have received from other quarters. I entirely agree with the general reasoning of your letter that the present moment, if prudently employed, is favourable for attaining for the Government the support of all those who are interested in the maintenance of order and the protection of property. Whether the formation of such bodies as those which subsist under the names of trades unions and of political unions is illegal may admit of considerable doubt. I entertain very little, however, that many of the measures taken by the trades unions are as clearly illegal as were the late proposed proceedings of the Birmingham Political Union. These if carried into effect would have amounted to a conspiracy to supersede and assume the power of the State. The resolutions and acts of the trades unions I conceive frequently to amount to a conspiracy to control their masters and to extort from them a higher rate of wages. An opinion to this effect was given by the late Attorney- and Solicitor-General, Sir James Scarlett and Sir Edward Sugden; but no proceeding of law was instituted upon this opinion by the late Government, nor has it as yet been deemed prudent to do so by his Majesty's present advisers. These trades unions are not at present either flourishing or extending themselves. In some instances, as at Nottingham, they have converted themselves into political unions. These latter societies have undoubtedly produced in the public mind

much alarm, and they have received a considerable check from this feeling.

London was at first comparatively quiet, but on the rejection of the second Reform Bill political agitation became sufficiently formidable there also.

Lord Melbourne to Sir F. Burdett. Secret and confidential. Home Office, October 27, 1831.

I PERCEIVE by the newspapers that you have consented to become the Chairman of the Political Union of London and Westminster. It is not for me either to question or to make any observation upon the prudence of this step, which has, of course, been taken with the best intentions, and upon a full consideration of the circumstances of the times. But, seeing that you are about so soon to act publicly in a situation of such importance, influence, and responsibility, I cannot refrain from expressing my earnest hope that you will see the matter in the same light that I do, and that you will not be led hastily to countenance measures which I observe are recommended by the journals of the greatest weight and ability published in this metropolis, and which I therefore conclude are not unlikely to be submitted to your consideration. Both the *Times* and the *Morning Chronicle* of this morning inculcate the necessity of an immediate general arming of the inhabitants of this city, and the forming them into a body under the designation of a Conservative Guard, or of a National Guard—the former title being new, and the latter borrowed from the French Revolution. The objections which I feel to any example of this nature, which would be immediately followed in all the great towns throughout the empire, being set by London and Westminster, must, I feel confident, immediately present themselves to your own mind.

First, the formation of any such body would be entirely illegal and unconstitutional, unless by the authority of the Crown, and under the command of officers appointed by his Majesty. Every subject of these realms has a right to the possession of arms for his defence; but to form military bodies, to muster, to array, to arm, and to train them, except by the direction and under the control of the sovereign authority, is clearly contrary to law, and entirely inconsistent with the continuance of legal government in the country.

Secondly, although considerable ferment prevails and a great disposition to violence and plunder exists amongst certain classes of the community, there does not appear to me to be so great a degree of danger as to justify the training to arms of all those who may be desirous of preventing tumult and protecting property. If it is inexpedient to train and exercise them, it is also inexpedient to arm them, because arms, placed in untrained hands, only produce accidental, unintended, and unnecessary bloodshed.

Thirdly, if any extraordinary measures are required, the law and the constitution clearly point out what they should be. It is unnecessary to have recourse to establishments with new and foreign names, or to any other weapons than the constable's staff. If the inhabitants of any division of the metropolis, or of the metropolis at large, feel apprehensive of disturbance and danger, let them come forward and be sworn in as special constables; and in that case there is a power in the magistrates to form and arrange them in such a manner as may render them effectual for other objects, and even to arm them with more formidable weapons, if such should appear to be necessary.

This letter produced little effect, since the National Political

Union, with affiliated societies, was formed on October 31, and the Government was compelled to issue a proclamation against it on November 22.

As to Lord Melbourne's opinions on Reform it is unnecessary to say much. He never liked the measure, and during the debate on the second Bill in the House of Lords he frankly admitted that he had been opposed to Parliamentary reform, and had even opposed the enfranchisement of Manchester and Birmingham, but he contended that the declared will of the country left the Legislature no alternative. Having once determined to support Reform, he supported it with energy, and was anxious that the recess previous to the introduction of the third Bill should be as short as possible.

Lord Palmerston to Lord Melbourne. Panshanger, November 20, 1831.

WERE you aware yesterday, when you turned the scale in favour of meeting in a fortnight, what has been the nature of the communications between Wharncliffe[1] and Grey, and has Grey shown you the memorandum of their conversation three days ago?

I saw Wharncliffe again the day before yesterday, and showed him Grey's memorandum, to which he made one or two additions, to explain more completely what he himself had said; and he told me that he considered the interview as very satisfactory. He said that since that interview he had seen several of those in the House of Peers who thought with him, and that he was convinced that, if any satisfactory arrangement could be made between himself and Grey, peers enough would follow him and Harrowby in changing their vote to ensure the success of the Bill. He had seen Dudley and the Bishop of London, and was going to see the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lyndhurst.

I am convinced that if time had been allowed for this

[1] Lord Wharncliffe and Lord Harrowby were the leaders of the Waverers.

negotiation it would have succeeded, and that by some modification in the Bill, which from what Wharncliffe said need not have been great, we could not only have improved the measure, but have ensured a majority in the House of Lords for that and all other purposes *before* Parliament had met.

How this is now to be done I hardly see. John Russell is to-morrow three weeks to expound what we call the principles, but what, as we well know from experience, will be all the *details*, of the Bill. From that moment negotiation is over, because, though men are flattered by being consulted beforehand, and may thereby be induced to go to great lengths, it is quite a different thing to summon them to agree to a measure already made public, and, therefore, in which they cannot suppose it possible for them to effect any change. But how can we expect that, with all the other unavoidable occupations of office, we can in the next fortnight do any good in so complicated an affair as communicating with Wharncliffe and his friends, and at the same time going on *pari passu* with our Cabinet discussions on the Bill?

I fear it is hopeless; and we shall meet Parliament with a Bill not to *our* liking, and without having secured the support of a majority in the House of Peers.

Every week would have been so much gained, as it would have been more easy for men to have come round. What the considerations are, connected with this question, which arise out of the state of things at home, you, of course, are best judge; but unless we think of proposing new laws for the suppression of these societies, it may be doubtful whether the good gained in this respect by the meeting of Parliament will counterbalance its inconvenience with regard to the

points above mentioned; and I presume we have not at present any measures to propose.

It is evident that Brougham has pledged himself in conversation with Barnes [1] and others that Parliament *should* meet before Christmas, and is determined from vanity to redeem his pledge, in order to show his ascendency in the Cabinet; and it is also equally evident that he fears that excitement about Reform could not be kept up in its present degree for six weeks longer, and also that these unions would disgust and alarm all well-meaning reformers, and so prejudice the cause. I have no doubt, also, that those out of the Cabinet who are most clamorous for an immediate meeting are so because they see that it would prevent all negotiation with the moderate party, and all possibility of coming to an understanding with them. But though these motives may be sufficient for those whom they actuate, they ought to influence us in a contrary direction. I think our division unfortunate. I wish Lansdowne had been in town, as he expressed to me the other day the strongest possible objection to an early meeting.

Hon. G. Lamb to Lord Melbourne. Sunday (1831).

THE interview between Wharncliffe and Grey had more positive results than you think for, and a note was made and verified by both of them as containing the substance of what passed. As far as I can understand, the chief points which it contains are the disfranchisement of the Nomination Boroughs; the extension of the constituency where it is too small; the limiting the new right of voting to the boroughs to be newly created; the reconsideration of Schedule B—some of its boroughs to be put into Schedule A, some to be left as they are, some

[1] The Editor of the *Times*.

to retain two members in conjunction with neighbouring towns;- the decreasing the numbers of new boroughs, in order to give in all cases two members to each.[1]

Wharncliffe has seen Harrowby and the Bishop of London, and is sure of their concurrence. The terms, he admits, are surely large enough to frame a satisfactory measure upon, but out of this course I see nothing but confusion. Your letter alarms me; it shows no resource between the violent men who are employed in framing a new measure and its absolute rejection by the Parliament. Yet between them stands the Cabinet; responsibility of the measure to be proposed rests with it; and I have no hesitation in saying that it would be infinitely better to break up the Government than to be party to a proposition more democratic than the last. There would in such a case be danger of convulsion, but there would also be the means of forming a new Government; but if your measure be brought forward and rejected I see nothing but danger, and no remedy. It seems clear that Grey is for moderation, but if nobody stands firmly by him he is sure to give way; and it seems to me that the violent part of the Cabinet are put in continual communication upon this subject, and act in concert, while those who ought to check them do not understand each other, and have no mutual reliance or knowledge of each other's sentiments. You may be right in your opinion of the last Bill, but I fear you are only deceiving your own conscience about it, for I have seen you of very different

[1] Schedule A enumerated the boroughs that were to be wholly disfranchised; Schedule B those which were to be partially disfranchised. Schedule B was reconsidered, the number of towns selected for partial disfranchisement being thirty instead of forty, the number in the second Bill. Greville gives a somewhat different version of the bases of agreement (*Journal*, part i. vol. ii. pp. 211, 212).

opinion. At all events, the idea of a concurrence in a more democratic measure passes my understanding. If Wharncliffe is satisfied I can myself count seven votes that will be changed, making a difference of fourteen. If in addition to these Grey would put himself (as he ought to do) in communication with the Church, and neutralise their votes, which surely, after what has passed, would not be very difficult, it is clear that the Bill would pass with a very slight creation of Peers, if any would be necessary, which I do not believe. In opposition to this what is there to be set, unless it be Althorp's and John Russell's popularity with the Birmingham Union and all such fellows?[1] Is it possible to doubt? and if it is not, have the sound part of the Cabinet sufficient force to compel this course? I say they have, and that it were better to break it up than to be a party to the opposite one. Nor, if this determination were taken, do I believe that Brougham would be found altogether intractable. The first step to be taken would be to gain him, and with that everything would be easy; but with or without I see no other safe course. What is chiefly wanting is courage; all the audacity and activity is on the other side, and where these are success follows.

As far as the Bill is concerned, I regret the decision about the meeting of Parliament; it is a difficulty the more in the way of a rational conclusion. If the state of the country requires it I have nothing to say. It is time, and high time, that something were done or at least said about these political unions. I forgot to mention that Wharncliffe wishes for the division into

[1] Lord Althorp and Lord John Russell were thanked by the Union at a meeting which pledged itself to resist the payment of taxes until the Bill was passed.

three bills—disfranchisement, enfranchisement, regulation.

I cannot understand Grey not having communicated it. He asked and received Wharncliffe's assent to doing it. It is remarkable that you have decided to call the Parliament at the very moment that the rascally press had begun to prepare the country for its being put off. There is something at work which we in the country cannot comprehend.

In such cases Charles IV. of Spain used to say there was a woman in them. I say there is Brougham.

In February 1832 Lord Melbourne was in communication with Lord Haddington, on behalf of the Waverers, but was unable to exact any adequate concessions.[1] Later on, though disgusted by the violent language of Lord Durham in the Cabinet—'If I had been Lord Grey,' he said, 'I should have knocked him down'—he acquiesced, though with some reluctance, in the minute recommending the immediate creation of Peers. Still, neither the conversations which Greville records with considerable minuteness, nor the following letter, written to Sir Frederick Lamb when all was over, convey the impression that he was at any period of the struggle an ardent reformer.

Lord Melbourne to Sir Frederick Lamb. Panshanger.

PALMERSTON, who is here, is going to send off a courier, so I write one line. . . . As to home politics, which are, undoubtedly, in a great and fearful crisis, it appears to me impossible to say anything upon them which can be relied upon. All depends upon the working of the Reform Act, and upon the character of the new Parliament. I saw by one of your letters that May had been writing

[1] Lord Haddington's letter is dated February 12, 1832, but it is not very important. Greville gives a summary (vol. ii. p. 245) of an interview between him and Lord Melbourne, which apparently led to the letter.

to you in a sanguine tone upon the subject, as if none but persons of consideration would be elected. It may be so, but nobody can say that with any confidence at present—certainly not until the registry of votes is completed; I think not until the elections have taken place. I do not myself much like the complexion of the public meetings of constituents of which I read in the newspapers. They seem to me to be very violent, to be disposed to go a great way, and to be demanding pledges in a very positive manner, which are given rather too readily and to too great an extent. The real thing to be feared is the prevalence of the Blackguard Interest in Parliament, and I fear there will be no inconsiderable portion of members of that description. The election violence seems to me to be very great all over the country, and of course will grow worse and worse. The Cabinet is dispersed, not to meet again until October 8, when we shall have many difficult questions to settle, particularly the government of Ireland, which there are great inconveniences in either retaining or keeping as it is; which latter, by the way, we cannot do, for neither the Lord Lieutenant nor Secretary will remain, particularly not the latter, who, though a man of considerable abilities, and of such abilities as are most required in this country, has about him both the faults of great spirit, of haste, and of rashness, and those of being discontented and disgusted. It is hard to keep a government which has rendered itself unpopular; but, in my opinion, it is still worse to change a government because it is unpopular. I, therefore, should decidedly wish them to remain; but Stanley will not do so.

It is quite evident that when the new Parliament meets we shall be pressed to go further in reform—viz.

to triennial Parliaments; and these matters will, undoubtedly, be mooted in the House of Commons, and I should expect also in the Cabinet. There is no knowing to what one may be led by circumstances, but at present I am determined to make my stand here, and not to advance any further.

By the way, I shall be much obliged to you if you could send me any information respecting the criminal code of the Austrian States, Hungary, &c.: What crimes are punished with death, and what punishments are fixed to crimes not capital; whether the punishments are rigorously inflicted, or if remitted, and upon what principles; how far the penitentiary system has been adopted, and the rules and regulations of such institutions; whether the system is effectual or not for the prevention or detection of crime; whether crime is on the increase or on the decrease; whether there is any transportation, or any equivalent to it; in short, any general intelligence upon the whole subject.

The disturbance in the rural districts did not cease with the rigorous proceedings of the Special Commission, and during the autumn the Home Secretary was in correspondence with the Duke of Wellington on the subject:—

The Duke of Wellington to Lord Melbourne. Private. Strathfieldsaye, November 3, 1832.

In consequence of the message I received from your lordship, I have made enquiries respecting the existence of a political union in this county. There is every reason to believe that there is one, or several local societies corresponding with each other in the district of the county extending from Winchester to Andover, in both of which towns there is either a political union or a principal branch of the general union. It is believed in the county that Cobbett is the person who first

established these unions here, and that they are in communication with him. I do not find that any act of outrage has been committed by these unions or by persons supposed to belong to them. It appears that one peasant threatened the magistrates in the petty sessions at Andover that, if not relieved, 'the union he belonged to would see him righted.' The farmers are certainly a good deal alarmed; and there is no doubt that these unions, and the facilities for meeting without being observed which the beer-houses throughout the country give, do afford the means of combining and of committing outrages by a considerable number of persons without risk of discovery, and with a prospect at least, which those concerned would be apt to consider a certainty, of protection against punishment.

It appears that the members of these unions contribute a penny a week each.

I believe it is impossible for the local authorities to do more than pay the utmost attention to all that passes, and to act promptly and vigorously in case any outrage should be committed. I have written accordingly to the resident magistrates of the county, and to the mayors of Winchester and Andover. I have requested these gentlemen to communicate with each other constantly, transmitting such information as each may receive.

I am going into Kent next week to attend the Dover Harbour Sessions, but I shall return here immediately afterwards, and shall be ready to execute any instructions that I may receive from your lordship.

Lord Melbourne to the Duke of Wellington.

I BEG leave to acknowledge your Grace's letter of the 3rd inst., and to return your Grace my best thanks for the information which it contains,

Private. Whitehall, November 7, 1832.

and which for the most part agrees with that which I had previously received. It gives me great concern to learn that the mind of that part of the country is still disturbed, and its tranquillity endangered, by the continued existence of political unions.

I should very much doubt whether Mr. Cobbett has committed himself so far as he would do by placing himself actually in communication with these bodies; at the same time, much both of his weekly writings and of his acts, such as his dinner at Sutton, prove that his attention is much fixed upon that quarter, and that he thinks it worth his while to keep up his influence in it. He has at various times published in his register the names and residences of some of his principal adherents in that neighbourhood, respecting whose character and proceedings it might be useful to obtain some information.

Further than this I know of no steps which can be taken, either by the magistrates or by your Grace, beyond those which your Grace states yourself in your letter already to have recommended.

The Duke of Wellington to Lord Melbourne. Private. Walmer Castle, November 7, 1832.

SINCE I wrote to your lordship last week on the subject of the political unions in the county of Hants, I have received some further information of which it may be interesting to your lordship to receive the communication.

I enclose your lordship the rules of the Barton Stacey Union. Your lordship will see that these rules refer to the Winchester Union. It is not quite clear yet whether there is one or several societies, each acting on the same model. It is certain that an application lately made to a man who keeps a public-

house not far from Andover, that he should let for hire a room in his house for a meeting to be held, '*by order of the committee*,' on the evening of Monday, November 12, was signed by '*John Stripp, Secretary*,' and dated '*Winchester National Union*.'

There have been instances of menaces to farmers who intimated an intention of lowering the wages of the labourers in their employment from ten to nine shillings a week. The labourers said 'that they had received directions from the union' not to take less than ten shillings, and that the union 'would stand by them.'

It is stated that above half of the labourers in the county are enrolled in these societies. Not less than twenty acknowledged the fact before the magistrates near Andover on Saturday last. They had applied for relief from their parish, and the magistrates enquired whether they did not belong to a political union, and had not paid sixpence entrance money, and did not continue to pay a penny a week. Each of them acknowledged the fact stated. It is understood by the labourers that the money subscribed will be applied to provide for their existence when they shall be unemployed, and to provide arms to enable them to defend themselves.

I hear a good deal of the circulation of 'Cobbett' and the 'Poor Man's Guardian' in this district.

I have not yet heard of any breach of the peace, but there is evidently a good deal of alarm throughout the county. A gentleman who resides at Barton Stacey reports that the practice of the sounds of the bugle have been heard at night in that neighbourhood.

There is a sufficient body of yeomanry force in the county of Hants, but no regular troops. If it were pos-

sible to station two or three companies belonging to the garrison of Portsmouth in the barracks of Winchester during the winter months, that measure might have the effect of preventing any breach of the peace; and at all events these troops would give countenance and eventual support to any measure which it might be necessary to adopt in case of any disturbance.

Lord Melbourne to the Duke of Wellington. Private. Whitehall, November 10, 1832.

I HAVE the honour of acknowledging your Grace's letter of the 7th inst., and returning you my thanks for the information which it conveys. The rules of the Barton Stacey Union which your Grace has transmitted I remember to have more than once read before, and I believe them to have been drawn up and circulated in the country by those persons in London who designate themselves the National Political Union, and who hold their meetings at a house in Theobald's Road.

These societies are of course responsible for any illegal language which they hold, or any acts which they commit, otherwise I am not aware of any law which renders their existence illegal whilst they continue separate and independent; but if, as is represented to your Grace, they in any manner communicate or correspond one with the other, they render both the society and its individual members liable to the operation of the 25th section of the 57 George III. c. 19, which is still in force, although the other parts of the same statute have expired. Persons offending against this law are, amongst other processes, subject to be summarily convicted and fined; and perhaps your Grace may deem it advisable to call the attention of the Justices of the Peace to this Act of Parliament, with the caution not to proceed upon it except in a very

clear case and upon very sufficient and unquestionable evidence.

I deeply regret to learn from your Grace that much alarm prevails in those parts of Hampshire to which your Grace refers. I feel assured that your Grace will use your utmost exertions to prevent its being yielded to. The concessions which were made to violence in the year 1830 have, I fear, had a permanently bad effect upon the character of the agricultural population.

Immediately upon receiving your Grace's letter, I consulted with the General Commanding-in-Chief upon the recommendation which it contained of stationing the military force at Winchester. The garrison at Portsmouth is too weak to furnish it, being already harassed by the duty which it has to perform. The whole force south of London, your Grace is well aware, is very small, but I will make every exertion for the adoption of your Grace's suggestion as speedily as possible.

Lord Melbourne to Sir H. Taylor. Whitehall, December 5, 1832.

I BEG leave to acknowledge your letters of the 30th ult. and the 2nd of the present month. I entirely agree with you in the construction which you put upon the addresses which have been presented to his Majesty upon the subject of Holland.[1]

This question, like many others, is taken up without reference to its real merits for the sole purpose of injuring the administration. Faction and party spirit are the prevailing vices of popular government, and so violent are they that they often overbear, even in

[1] Protests against the expulsion of the Dutch from Belgium by means of an embargo on Dutch shipping, and the French expeditionary force under Marshal Gérard.

patriotic and honourable minds, all considerations of public utility and even all regard to justice and truth. It has often struck me that they are infinitely more absurd and injurious when they interfere with the foreign than with the domestic affairs of a country. The public judgment upon domestic questions is often sufficiently erroneous, but the intervention in foreign questions of those who are guided only by enmity and passion, who have never given due consideration to the subject, nor possess the means of making themselves acquainted with the actual circumstances, can never be productive of anything but mischief. The gentlemen who waited upon me, I doubt not, are sincere in their disclaimer of political motives, but no meeting has been distinguished by greater violence or more unbounded intemperance of language.

The session of 1833 was remarkable, so far as English affairs were concerned, for the Factory Bill, the preparation of which fell to the Home Office. But the only portions of Lord Melbourne's correspondence during the year that appear of particular interest deal with the disordered state of the country.

Lord Grey to Lord Melbourne. Downing Street, May 15, 1833.

I HAD already seen a printed copy of Attwood's letter. The *object* of the meeting, the discussion of Ministers, is certainly not illegal,[1] but the terms of excitement addressed to the populace, and the means of enforcing that object by calling upon the people 'to come together *once more*' in their countless masses, are at least dangerous to the public peace. Whether under these circumstances similar measures to those adopted here would be right and expedient is a point which I am not so well able to determine, at least

[1] The Union declared the Government 'unable or unwilling to extricate the country from the difficulties and dangers with which it is surrounded.'

without the concurrence of our colleagues, and I should say also the opinion of the law-officers of the Crown. That it is necessary, however, to take measures for checking proceedings, the avowed object of which is to overawe the King and the Parliament by a display of physical force, appears to me incontestable.

There seems to have been some very unpleasant evidence given before the coroner. How came these adverse witnesses to be the first examined?[1]

The same to the same. May 22, 1833.

WHERE so many accounts agree, I think we may fairly conclude that the Birmingham meeting did not answer the views of Messrs. Attwood and O'Connell; but this new system of establishing clubs to procure arms should be carefully watched. The speeches are very violent and mischievous, but I am afraid there is nothing in them which could be successfully prosecuted. There are some passages, however, that a good jury could not fail, I think, to pronounce highly seditious.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Melbourne. Bowood, October 26, 1833.

I HAVE read with great concern in the papers of to-day the account of what must be considered the successful resistance, in one instance at least, to the payment of assessed taxes in London;[2] and though I cannot doubt that your feelings on the subject would be same with my own, I have too strong a conviction of the mischievous effect it may produce not to express it, as the Cabinet is at this moment scattered.

I see every appearance, not only in London, but in

[1] At the Coldbath Fields meeting, a policeman was stabbed to death. The jury returned a verdict of 'justifiable homicide.'

[2] An Association was formed in Marylebone to resist the imposition of the House Tax.

almost every town I hear anything about, of the formation of a Radical party, not yet strong in numbers and much less in influence, but which any semblance of triumph would call into activity, and add to its strength many who would not be withheld by principle from joining any popular cry the moment it appeared the successful cause. I trust, therefore, the means may be found of preventing any further effectual resistance to the law, for which no effort should be spared, and Government will be supported in it now by the great majority of the country.

I propose being in town in the course of a week.

In 1834 the new Poor Law was added to the Statute Book; but, though prepared at the Home Office from the report of the Commission in 1832, its conduct through the Upper House was entrusted to Lord Brougham.[1] Lord Melbourne's hands were full enough however, especially when the conviction of the six Dorsetshire labourers for administering illegal oaths was followed by the monster demonstration of trades unions on April 21; which marched from White Conduit House, near King's Cross, to the Home Office, and demanded the return of the labourers from Australia. Lord Melbourne quietly refused to receive the demonstration, and it was persuaded to pass on to Newington. His arrangements generally are remembered by the present Lord Grey, then Under-Secretary at the Home Office, as having been particularly good.

The following letter, addressed to a Dorsetshire magistrate, shows that, although the Home Secretary was determined to carry out the law with firmness, he would be no party to the straining of the law:—

[1] An apology is, perhaps, necessary for quoting once more the familiar dialogue between Lord Melbourne and Mr. Denison, afterwards Lord Ossington. The latter used to relate that, encountering Lord Melbourne when about to mount his horse at the door of the office, he called his attention to some required modifications in the new Poor Law Bill. Lord Melbourne referred him to his brother George. 'I have been with him,' was the reply, 'but he damned me, and damned the Bill, and damned the paupers.' 'Well, damn it, what more could he do?' was the rejoinder.

To Mr. James Frampton. Private and confidential. South Street, March 26, 1834.

WE have now had experience—very long experience—amongst the manufacturing population of that evil with which we are now, perhaps, destined to contend in the agricultural districts, and the safest course will be to take that experience for our guide. The farmers stand to the labourers in the same relation as the master manufacturers stand to their workmen. The law with respect to both classes is substantially the same. It may be somewhat varied by particular Acts of Parliament, but in general it is the same. By that law, whether wise or otherwise, unions and combinations for the purpose of raising or of lowering wages—provided they do not resort to violence, fraud, intimidation, illegal oaths, or acts in themselves illegal—are legal. Is it possible, then, for the Government to advise the magistrates, or for the magistrates to advise the farmers, to discharge their men for doing that which may be not only legal, but just and reasonable? Would not the respective parties so acting take upon themselves a great responsibility, incur much odium, and subject themselves to observations which it would be difficult to reply to?

It also occurs to me to ask very seriously whether such a course, if recommended and adopted, would be likely to be successful and effectual. It has always been found difficult to obtain co-operation amongst the master manufacturers, and the farmers are still more timid, more disunited, more attentive to their particular situation and individual interests, and at the same time less intelligent and apprehensive. My impression is that, if the recommendation of the magistrates became very unpopular, or in any way seemed in danger of failure, you would be abandoned by many of those who

would at first embrace the plan, and the whole blame would be thrown upon those who had suggested the measure.

You will naturally ask me, Are we, then, to wait with our arms folded whilst this combination spreads itself throughout the peasantry, and prepares, undisturbed, the most dangerous results? I am compelled to answer, that in the present state of the law and of the public feeling, I see no safe or effectual mode of prevention. Speaking candidly, it appears to me highly improbable that an evil which has so long afflicted the manufacturing districts should not, in the present state of general restlessness, creep into and infest the agricultural parts of the country. We meet it as well as we can. If it should assume a more dangerous character, the immediate peril will probably at once suggest, and reconcile the public mind to, the necessary measures.

Private. House of Lords, March 31, 1834.

I HAVE received your letter of the 29th instant, and return you many thanks for it. I shall be very glad to learn that the farmers refuse to employ those labourers who have engaged in the union, and I am of opinion that it will be much better that they should do so of their own accord, and from themselves, than upon the recommendation of the magistrates. If they adopt such a course upon their own responsibility they will be more likely to persevere in it; it will have a greater effect upon the labourers themselves, and will be less offensive to them than it would be if it could be attributed, as it would be, solely to the influence and interference of the higher classes of society. At the same time the farmers should receive every encouragement and support in such proceedings, always taking it for granted that they have themselves

acted justly, and have not generally attempted to reduce the wages of the labourers below their fair and natural level. I say *generally*, because it is impossible to guard against particular cases of hard dealing and injustice. I omitted in my former letter to state that, a union for legal purposes being itself legal, it appeared to me doubtful whether a labourer who was thrown out of employment by being discharged by his master for belonging to a union could be refused parish relief.

I am much obliged to you for your very particular account of the persons convicted. It proves that the law has in this case been most properly applied. There is nothing that strikes me as being necessary to be added, unless you could inform me of the grounds upon which it is stated that James and George Loveless were active in the riots of 1830.

I had heard from Lord Shaftesbury that one of the convicts had been too ill to be removed. He should be removed as soon as he is sufficiently recovered.[1]

The King to Lord Melbourne. Windsor Castle, March 30, 1834.

THE King has received Viscount Melbourne's letter of yesterday and its enclosures, and has given his serious attention to the communications made by Lord Lyttelton upon the state of the trades unions in Birmingham. The subject had always appeared to his Majesty one of the deepest importance to the peace and prosperity of the country and to the interests of society, and he laments the increase of an evil which may possibly terminate in the decay and the natural death of the exciting causes, but which in the meantime, and in its mischievous progress, may

[1] The haste with which the labourers were despatched to Australia, though a wise precaution, increased the clamour against the convictions.

expose, in the opinion of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the country to much contest, inconvenience, and loss; to menace, much alarm, and possibly to actual commotion. Surely if such be the anticipations of the Minister best situated, and therefore best qualified, to form an opinion on the subject; and if it be admitted that no remedy can be applied, that the fire cannot be extinguished, but that it must burn until it burns out, and has damaged and destroyed that which it can reach, there must be something in the law of the country which is inadequate and defective, which requires to be amended in order to secure property, to check menace, and to secure the country from the visitation of actual commotion. The various trades may differ in their situations, their objects, views, motives, and modes of acting, and therefore may not unite in one body for the purpose of any general and simultaneous movement—and God forbid they should!—but still it is admitted that there is sufficient of purpose and union to produce actual commotion and to inflict serious evil upon the commerce and prosperity of the country. The men concerned avow their intention of appealing to brute force; they defy the law, and they intimidate the parties into compliance with their demands because the law does not afford protection to those who are so assailed. A contractor, for instance, may obtain an extension of time, but the delay and the interruption of his arrangements must entail serious loss upon him, and unless supported he must end by yielding.

Upon the whole, the King cannot lose sight of the importance of endeavouring to impose some check to the *progress* of this evil, and to adopt some *preventive* measures, instead of trusting to its *decay* after the edifice shall have been injured; and he is anxious that the

question should be brought under the consideration of his Government at the approaching meeting of Cabinet.

Lord Melbourne to the King. Whitehall, April 2, 1834.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and begs leave to acknowledge your Majesty's gracious communication of March 30 upon the subject of trades unions. Viscount Melbourne feels entirely with your Majesty that these combinations, the extent to which they have spread, the tone which they assume, and the pretensions which they advance, demand the utmost vigilance and the most serious attention of your Majesty's servants.

Viscount Melbourne, however, begs humbly to explain to your Majesty that it was only out of superabundant caution that he admitted in his letter to Lord Lyttelton that serious commotion was a probable result of the present state of these unions.

That they inflict loss both upon those who engage in them and upon those against whom they are directed, both upon the masters and the men, and consequently upon the community at large, is a clear, undeniable fact; but, notwithstanding their menacing language and attitude, Viscount Melbourne does not at present anticipate from them any material disturbance of the public peace. Men often threaten the most violently when they are the most afraid, and Viscount Melbourne attributes their present clamour to the strong impression made upon them by the recent conviction in Dorsetshire, and to their consciousness of the mortal blow which it strikes at the root of the whole of their proceedings.

Viscount Melbourne partakes of the opinion expressed by your Majesty that the prevalence of those combinations affords reason to apprehend that there

must be something in the law of the country upon the subject inadequate and defective, and which requires to be amended. The difficulty is to discover where the inadequacy and defect lies, and how it is to be supplied or corrected. That the vice is not of recent origin is sufficiently proved by a reference to the preamble of the 6th Geo. IV. c. 129, the Act repealing the combinations laws, which preamble enumerates the statutes enacted upon this subject.

The first of those statutes was passed in the thirty-third year of Edward I., the last in the fifty-seventh of George III., and the intermediate period exhibits a list of thirty-six English and Scotch laws, all directed to the repression of these practices and the regulation of the trade in this respect. The early date and the number of these statutes prove at once the antiquity of the mischief, its continued prevalence, the deep sense which was entertained of the necessity of remedying it, and the inefficiency of the legislative provisions adopted for that purpose. To this long list of failure Viscount Melbourne fears there must be added that of the 5th Geo. IV. c. 95, and the 6th Geo. IV. c. 129, which repealed all former statutes against combinations, and enacted the law which is at present in force. Since the passing of this Act the evil has undoubtedly shown itself more manifestly and increased, but whether entirely in consequence of the passing of the Act it appears to Viscount Melbourne to be impossible to presume with confidence.

Upon the whole, Viscount Melbourne humbly trusts that your Majesty will rest assured that the subject will be considered by his Majesty's servants with that circumspection which is suggested by its evident difficulty, and at the same time with the firmness and determina-

tion which are required by its dangerous and formidable character.

In the midst of his various occupations Lord Melbourne found time to write a thoughtful letter to Lord Bexley, better known perhaps as Mr. Vansittart, who had taken much interest in the Penitentiary at Milbank, on the question of secondary punishments:—

Private and confidential. South Street, April 9, 1834.

I AM sure you will agree with me that the principal aim and object of punishment which it is the duty of Government to keep steadily in view is to deter from the commission of offences as far as possible; and here it is, in my opinion, that the institution of the Penitentiary, as it is at present applied, is faulty and defective. In order that a penalty may be feared, it must be sure, beforehand, that in certain circumstances it will be incurred; in order that punishment may be dreaded, its infliction must be anticipated. Now, no man knows that in case of any delinquency he shall be subjected to the discipline of the Penitentiary; all he knows is, that possibly he may be. The course is, that from the whole mass of persons convicted a certain number, whose cases are thought to be lighter and to admit of more excuse than those of the rest, or whose age and character seem to hold out a greater hope of their ultimate reformation, are selected to be sent to this prison, and in this manner the principal effect of the existence of the institution is to add another chance to the already, perhaps, too numerous chances of the criminal law. If there be, then, any terror in imprisonment under the various modifications by which it is regulated in the Penitentiary, we lose by the manner in which we apply it all the benefit and advantage of that terror. I am

anxious, therefore, to have the benefit of your opinion upon a plan which has struck me as being calculated to obviate this objection, and to derive from the Penitentiary all the benefit which such an establishment is calculated to confer upon the community; and if your opinion be favourable to this design, I feel also confident that I shall receive your assistance in carrying it into execution.

In punishment there can, after all, be little or no novelty. It was known long ago what and how much man can inflict upon man, and it is not likely now that there should be either invention or discovery in this respect. All these matters, which are brought forward with some little pomp under the names of penitentiaries, prison discipline, panopticon, &c., and dignified with the titles of systems and theories, are, in fact, different regulations of imprisonment for the purpose of rendering it more effectual. I believe that these rules, by which cleanliness and order and labour are imposed, and silence enforced, do render it more effectual, do inspire a greater dread of its repetition, and produce a better frame of mind, and one that is more likely in future to abstain from criminality, and, therefore, I would, as speedily as possible, extend these advantages to all imprisonment; and with this view, and as a considerable step towards that end, I would propose that the Penitentiary at Milbank should be appropriated to the reception of offenders sentenced to confinement in the metropolis.

It appears by returns from all the prisons in London, Westminster, and Southwark, that the total number of persons sentenced during the year 1833 to imprisonment for terms varying from a single day to two years has been no less than 14,643, of whom 11,880 have been

committed for periods of a month and under. The crowded state of these prisons, occasioned by the confinement of so great a number of offenders, and the still more numerous committals for trial, has been productive of the most serious evils. It has made it impossible to enforce such a system of discipline as would render the punishment really formidable, and it puts out of the question any attempt of protecting less hardened offenders, and those who are only committed for trial, from the contagion of intercourse with the most abandoned criminals. Both of these ends might be answered in a very great degree by the employment of the Penitentiary in the manner which I have above suggested.

In spite of the pressure of business Lord Melbourne, while Home Secretary, did not relinquish his habits of study. A letter from the Principal Librarian of the British Museum [1] shows that he was at this time investigating early dramatic literature, and enquiring after the following books:—

Dr. Rainold's 'Overthrow of Stage Plays.' 4*d.* 1599.

Master Northbrook's 'Treatise against Vaine Plays and Interludes.' 1577.

Stephen Gosson's 'Plays Confuted in Five Actions.' About 1581.

Stubbe's 'Anatomie of Abuses.' 12*d.* 1585.

Heywood's 'Apology for Actors.' 4*d.* 1612.

J. G.'s (John Green's) 'Refutation of Heywood's Apologie.' 1615.

The entries in the Commonplace Book, the last of which were made in 1832 and 1833, show that he was still reading his favourite authors, Aristotle and Thucydides, Clarendon and Burnet. One of the last entries is a quotation of the well-known lines from the 'Henriade' (chap. i. p. 7)—

> Mais Henri s'avançait vers sa grandeur suprême
> Par des chemins cachés, *inconnus à lui-même*—

[1] Sir H. Ellis's letter is dated February 21, 1834.

with the comment: 'The case with every great man. Much of what is attributed to design, accident; an unknown cause leading to an unknown end.'

Lord Melbourne's theological reading, which was considerable, was probably begun somewhat later; at any rate, no record of it has been preserved.

CHAPTER VI

IRISH AFFAIRS

1830–1834

UNSATISFACTORY as was the condition of England on the accession of Lord Grey's Government to power, the state of Ireland was even worse. It was calculated that one-fifth of the population was out of employment, and the tithe war had begun in the west and in the south. Side by side with the agrarian difficulty there was, as usual, a political agitation. O'Connell had hardly effected Catholic Emancipation when he raised the banner of Repeal, and that for the moment seemed to the Cabinet to call for the more serious attention. In the Instructions to the new Lord Lieutenant, Lord Anglesey, the Home Secretary wrote that—

A great ferment and agitation prevails in the public mind in Ireland, occasioned and excited by the question of the Repeal of the Union, which, although disapproved by the great majority of the rank and wealth of the country, is stated to have made considerable progress amongst the middle and lower orders, and to be promoted and encouraged by some of the Roman Catholic priesthood. Several meetings have been held in different parts of the country upon this question, at which the most inflammatory language has been uttered, and rebellious designs and intentions, if we are rightly informed, have been openly avowed. Any notion of the Repeal of the Union your Excellency will dis-

courage and discountenance in the strongest manner in your power, and you will use every effort to allay excitement, and to prevent the agitation of the question.

Lord Anglesey was directed to permit such meetings, so long as they were legally assembled for a legal purpose, even including the discussion of Repeal; but to prohibit them by proclamation if they should betray or manifest a design to renew under any name the Roman Catholic Association.

The following letters relate partly to the unsuccessful effort to secure the adherence of O'Connell by office,[1] and the trial of strength which ensued so soon as Lord Anglesey arrived in Ireland.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Anglesey. Private; most secret. Whitehall, December 18, 1830.

You will either by the same post as carries you this letter or by the next receive the Instructions which we have drawn up and agreed upon. Grey will write to you about the Attorney-General. Upon full consideration of the subject, and consultation with Doherty,[2] I am of the same opinion as he is, that Blackburne is the best appointment upon the whole that can be made.[3]

Sir Henry Parnell[4] having pressed upon me in the most urgent manner the necessity of gratifying O'Connell, I desired my brother to communicate to him for his satisfaction what had passed between O'Connell and you at his last interview, and your conviction that it was hopeless to entertain any further expectation of conciliating him. He said that, whatever had passed, he

[1] See the account of the negotiations in Mr. Fitzpatrick's *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell* (vol. i. pp. 237–239).

[2] The Solicitor-General for Ireland; he had held the office under the Duke, and O'Connell was very indignant when he was not removed.

[3] The appointment was, however, strongly denounced, as Blackburne was a decided Tory, and had been President of the Special Commission which sat in 1823 to try the rioters in Limerick and Clare.

[4] Sir Henry Parnell was member for Queen's County. He became Secretary at War in 1831.

was of a different opinion, and that no reliance was to be placed upon any declaration made by O'Connell, however vehement and decided, and that he was certain he would immediately accept any direct offer that was made him. He mentioned the Chief Baron's place; but that being filled up, the only opening that remained was the Master of the Rolls, in case Macmahon should resign it, a step which he contemplated taking. I enclose you a letter which Sir H. Parnell sent me upon this matter, and which, as you will see by reading it, he wrote after having conversed with Wyse,[1] whose opinion it also contains. Wyse knows O'Connell well, at the same time he is in his heart not friendly to him, and may perhaps entertain of him a worse and lower opinion than he deserves. This matter has been considered by the Cabinet, and they will have no objection to the arrangement if it could be effected, on the contrary, would greatly approve it. O'Connell as Master of the Rolls would be perfectly harmless. The Court has, I believe, but little business; what there is relates almost entirely to the distribution of property, and he would have no opportunity of making speeches, as he would have if he were placed at the head of the Common Law Courts, upon the various occasions of giving charges to Grand Juries, passing sentences upon prisoners, &c.

This matter, you will be aware, must be managed with the greatest secrecy and discretion, and the intention must not be suffered to transpire until it is certain it can be carried into execution. The great point is to secure Macmahon's resignation; the next, O'Connell's acceptance. I do not know Macmahon's feelings, but perhaps he would be unwilling to give way if he knew

[1] The historian of the Catholic Association, afterwards Secretary to the Board of Control (1846–49) and Minister at Athens (1849–1862).

who was destined to be his successor. All these possibilities must be taken into consideration, and the matter proceeded in with that caution which its delicacy and importance demands. I hope you are pretty well, and have not suffered from your journey.

Lord Anglesey to Lord Melbourne. Holyhead, December 21, 1830.

I HAVE received your letter of the 18th. You will judge that I am pleased, as I suggested such a step in my letter of yesterday night; I do not, however, expect success from it. My conviction is, as I have already said and written, that O'Connell *is not to be had.* He is flying at higher game than a judgeship, and he is secure of a better income from the deluded people than *any Government* can venture to give to *any person* whatever. Still, you are bound to make every effort to gain him; for unless you do, he and not the Government will rule Ireland. It is idle and absurd to shut your eyes to the degrading fact. We have now positively nothing to look to but the army. You see the tone of the Protestants; you see how they take Gregory's removal.[1] That measure, which formerly would have chained the Catholics to my car, will now pass unnoticed by them, but will be a rallying point for the ill-humour and disgust of the Protestants. I have been ruminating upon the measure of endeavouring to enregiment the well-affected of Dublin upon the first symptom of real mischief. The College, the trades, the shopkeepers, might have been useful, even the lawyers; but now all appears against us, and I fear any attempts of the sort would only expose our weakness.

I do not receive a single letter from my many friends and well-wishers who do not write in deep

[1] The Under-Secretary was Sir William Gosset.

despondency. All of every side attribute much of the mischief to Doherty's appointment; I believe it to have been a bad one, but I am sure it has little to do with the line taken by O'Connell. I tell you he looks far beyond anything we can do for him. Doherty is merely the pretext for hostility. If that had not presented itself, he would have found another. . . .

When I was popular, and really had Ireland almost at my foot, I calculated much upon the attractions of a splendid Court, which would first have drawn many of the absentees to Dublin, and then have sent them down to their counties. This would have been a work of more than one session, but I am sure that in the then temper of the people it would have effected much, and a few yards of title for O'Connell would have secured repose. I have no hope of any such result now. Still I dare not venture to recommend anything which should have the appearance of tending to reduce the circulation of money in the country. If anything can save it, it will be an ample and immediate grant for the employment of the people in draining bogs, making roads, &c., &c. If you cannot do that, you cannot hold Ireland under an Imperial Parliament, and therefore, ultimately, not at all. In respect of health, I still just hold my head up, but I am sadly threatened. I pray for a good day on Thursday, when, please God, I will put a very ungrateful people (or rather, let me say, a deluded people) to shame, and show them that I ride the same pace through an affectionate as through an insulting crowd.

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Stanley. South

I YESTERDAY received yours of the 4th inst., together with Anglesey's of the second.

With respect to remedial measures, we are

Street, January 7, 1831. well aware that you can have but little time for the consideration or preparation of them at present. We are pretty well pressed, or rather oppressed, with the current business here, but we will make every exertion to assist you. I had on Sunday a very full conversation with Rice, Newport, and Duncannon [1] upon the subjects which I mentioned to you in my former letter. I hope to be able shortly to send you a minute of what passed, and also the heads of a Bill for your consideration on the subject of the Grand Jury presentments, which appear to us the most urgent of all the topics, as affecting the most deeply and extensively the property of the country. Perhaps you will in return communicate the principal provisions of your intended Vestry Bill. It appears to me that it should repeal the former Bill, re-enact its remedial clauses, the appeal, &c., embody Goulburn's letter, and throw the burden of the rate upon the owner instead of the occupier.

Education is a most thorny and difficult question. I entirely agree with you in all the principles which you lay down, and also in all the qualifications of those principles which your discretion suggests to you.[2] For those grants which have been already condemned by Parliament, you are expected to bring about their final extinction with all practicable celerity, and you

[1] Mr. Spring Rice was Secretary to the Treasury; Sir J. Newport, member for Waterford. Lord Duncannon, Commissioner of Woods and Forests, was a great authority on Irish affairs as a resident and popular Irish landlord.

[2] Mr. Stanley's proposal was 'the gradual withdrawal of grants from societies for exclusive education, and the extension of Parliamentary aid to a system of combined education, if a system could be matured which would produce that effect, and give general—he could not say universal—satisfaction.' It was on those lines that the Education Bill of 1832 was framed.

will receive a Treasury minute, which will convey to you the intentions of the Government upon this subject. With respect to the Kildare Street Society, of which I fully admit with you the merits and the advantages, and any other institutions which it may be advisable to form for the purpose of education, it is suggested by Rice, and I communicate it to you for your consideration, that the whole sum intended to promote this object in Ireland should be voted at once in gross, to be applied and distributed by the Irish government according to their judgment and discretion. This possession of funds would give to the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary a weight of authority with the Kildare Street Society, for instance, which they have never yet possessed, and which would hardly be resisted. Hitherto the Government has always to contend with them at a disadvantage, they (the Society) having the funds for the present year already independently in their hands, and the only argument which the Lord Lieutenant has had it in his power to use to them has been the danger that, unless they complied with his recommendation, Parliament would in the next year refuse the grant; a danger which was in some degree distant, and which, as it never yet had been, the usual confidence of human nature led them to think never would be, realised. But if the Lord Lieutenant were enabled to say to them, 'I have the power of withholding this money, and unless you are reasonable I will exercise that power,' it appears to me probable that his advice would be somewhat more effectual than it hitherto has been found to be.

Your observations upon Maynooth and the Roman Catholic clergy are very sound and just. The subject must have very serious attention paid to it, and that

speedily; but it is so large and so important that I am obliged to quit it for the present.[1]

The same to the same. Private. Home Office, January 13, 1831.

I HAVE received from his Majesty the warmest and most decided approbation of the measures which the Lord Lieutenant has adopted for suppressing the illegal meetings attempted to be assembled by Mr. O'Connell. This approbation is entirely concurred in by all the Ministers, and you may feel sure of the most cordial and determined support in any steps which you may think it necessary to take under the very difficult and arduous circumstances in which you are placed.

For myself, and I believe I express the opinion of others—I know I do of Lord Grey—I have never entertained the slightest doubt that it would be found necessary to renew the 9th Geo. IV. c. 1. The long and most unfortunate delay in granting the Roman Catholic claims suffered the habit of public meetings and public harangues, of combination and association, to become so inveterate in Ireland, and established the personal weight and influence of Mr. O'Connell to such a degree that I see no prospect, without the aid of such a measure, of preventing an assembly being constituted in Dublin which will possess more power in that country

[1] 'As to the grant to the College of Maynooth,' wrote Mr. Stanley, 'I would press upon the Government to consider whether the grant might not be with great advantage got rid of—or rather merged in one of much larger extent—for the payment, during good behaviour, of the Catholic clergy. . . . It seems to me that a vote of a large amount to the clergy, considered as a measure of police, might be a cheap bargain, and would stand upon grounds quite different from, and far less objectionable than, one of not one-tenth the amount for an exclusive education in limits we deem erroneous.' It is hardly necessary to say that the scheme, which has been powerfully advocated within recent years by Mr. Matthew Arnold, has never been carried out, partly owing to religious feeling in England, partly to the Radical opposition to religious endowments.

than the Imperial Parliament. But it also appears to me clear and certain that it will be necessary not only to renew, but to strengthen the law, and to frame some provisions which shall meet the various shifts and devices by which Mr. O'Connell has lately been attempting to check or defeat the operation of the Act.[1] His objects are clear and undisguised. He does not take the trouble to attempt to conceal them under any plausible pretext. You have, of course, already fully considered whether there is no law—common or statute—at present in existence by which he can be reached, and you will lose no time in directing your own attention and that of the law officers to the difficult task of discovering such new enactments as may, either by giving a more extended operation to the proclamation, or by subjecting the individual who shall manifest an open intention of breaking the law to penal consequences, prevent for the future the adoption of a course similar to that which Mr. O'Connell is at present pursuing. I am well aware that it will be no easy matter to reconcile such a law with the constitutional right of discussion and petition, a right which none of us wish to infringe upon or restrict; but I trust means may be found for repressing turbulence and sedition without interfering with these important privileges of the subject.

I send you by this post three keys—the one a master-key, the other two belonging respectively to the two boxes, which may be used for any secret correspondence.

Do you still think that precautions of this kind are necessary? Everyone invariably is of that opinion

[1] By assembling meetings under the guise of public breakfasts, by forming new associations as fast as the old ones were dissolved, and so forth.

when first they go to Ireland, and as invariably gets rid of it after a month or two of residence there.

The same to the same. Private. Home Office, January 20, 1831.

ADVERTING again to your letter of the 14th inst., and also to your letter of the 18th inst. received this morning, respecting the immediate and severe distress which is apprehended in certain districts of the west and north-west of Ireland, I have only to observe that you must, of course, take with sufficient promptitude such measures as are necessary to meet the emergency. I find that in the summer of 1822, besides the large sum voted for the construction of public works in Ireland, a vote of credit for 100,000*l.* was taken, and that money placed at the disposal of the Lord Lieutenant for the immediate relief of those parts of the country which were suffering under the scarcity of provisions which prevailed at that period.

You are well aware of the permanent evil which is produced in the habits and character of the population by largesses either of food or of money, and you are also well aware how liable a government is to be imposed upon in such matters by false representations, and by the fraudulent schemes of avarice and self-interest. The Lord Lieutenant will therefore, no doubt, exercise the utmost caution, and will take care to ascertain upon authority which cannot be doubted or disputed the existence of distress so urgent as to make the interference of the Government absolutely and indispensably necessary. If you should be persuaded of the establishment of such a case as irresistibly demands your interference in furnishing the means of subsistence, you will recur to the experience of the year 1822, to which I have already referred, and of the transactions of which

you will obtain full information from Mr. Gregory and others. This experience will probably enable you to avoid many errors which were then committed, to detect many frauds then successfully practised, and, upon the whole, to conduct this difficult and questionable measure in the manner calculated to afford the greatest immediate relief, and to produce the least possible of permanent evil. If I remember right, the distribution of the provisions, and the arrangement of the whole transaction, was then conducted principally through the Commissariat department.

The same to the same. Private. Home Office, January 22, 1831.

I SEND you by to-night's post a copy of the proposed new Sub-letting Act,[1] which you will have carefully considered by the law officers. We are anxious, if possible, for the purpose of expediating the business of the session and of somewhat dividing the labour, to introduce some of these remedial measures into the House of Lords in the first instance. This is impossible with respect to the Bill for public works, or those for the regulation of the Grand Juries and Vestries, they being in fact all of them measures of taxation. But I do not myself see anything which should prevent this course being taken with the Sub-letting Bill. But if this is to be the case, I should be anxious to be furnished with some better ground for repealing the former Bill than any with which I have yet been made acquainted. I never did whilst I was in Ireland, nor have I since, seen one case in which it had been clearly made out that this law had operated oppressively, or indeed that it had operated

[1] The first Sub-letting Act, the object of which was to prevent the multiplication of holdings, was passed in 1826. Compare Lord Melbourne's correspondence with Bishop Doyle, given by Mr. Torrens (i. 361-362) from Mr. Fitzpatrick's Biography.

at all; and if I were now called upon to state why it should be repealed, I know not what I should be able to urge, further than that it had been made very unpopular by the invectives and misrepresentations of Mr. O'Connell; an argument which, however reasonable it may be to act upon, it would not be either convenient or becoming to avow. Pray try to furnish us with some decent and creditable reasons.

At last the duel between the Lord Lieutenant and O'Connell was brought to an end by the arrest of the agitator on January 19. Lord Anglesey wrote in high spirits:—

To Lord Melbourne. Dublin, January 22, 1831.

STANLEY will detail to you what O'Connell is now at. He is at his wit's end. The rent has totally failed. His run upon the bank is universally execrated. There are not six respectable men throughout Ireland that stick to him. He is beat to pieces in his law,[1] and the Attorney-General, who has this moment left me, is most decidedly of opinion that a letter or speech (I forget which), published in the *Freeman* or *Register* this morning, is more inflammatory, more treasonable, and *more tangible* than anything that has yet appeared. I have not yet seen the article. Blackburne is most sanguine, most eager, most confident. It is my business not to be borne forward beyond the bounds of prudence, and to be calm whilst these lawyers are so elated with fair prospects of victory.

In the meantime O'Connell is trying his manœuvres with Lords Meath and Cloncurry, but they will be quite

[1] O'Connell made the mistake of demurring to the first fourteen counts of the indictment, whereby he admitted the facts, but disputed the legality of the proceedings. He was allowed to withdraw the demurrers, and to plead 'not guilty' to the whole indictment.

guarded, and will not trust him in any way whatever.[1] They will most particularly state that they cannot possibly be the mediums of communication between the Government and him. That, in fact, the Government will not negotiate but will act; and *I* am to be represented as not approachable upon terms. That I am filled with amazement at his baseness and ingratitude. In fact, that I am a very Turk at least. This may have some effect upon his coward mind.[2] Of course I am not to be supposed to know anything whatever of the occurrence.

You are, I am happy to say, anticipated about the aid of provisions. Whilst I have, on the one hand, sent down Major Carter into the district the most pressed, and where the people have actually stopped the exportation of grain, with an increased force of constabulary and a few soldiers, and have also desired my brother the Admiral to send a cruiser to Bellmullet to communicate with the Preventive Service there and with Major Carter; on the other hand, I have desired that an immediate supply of potatoes may be sent to those poor people who really are in utter want, all their potatoes being one mass of maggots. Care will be taken that they shall not starve. The magistrates and merchants connected with Bellmullet have subscribed about 300*l.*, and I propose to meet them with a similar sum, exacting, however, labour for what is distributed. Upon the whole, I think the magistrates are showing more zeal and activity. What I now most dread is the unruly

[1] The negotiations with Lord Meath and Lord Cloncurry broke down because they declined to pledge themselves to the future support of Repeal (Fitzpatrick, i. 245).

[2] O'Connell, as a matter of fact, did shrink from a collision with the Government, and offered to let judgment go against him by default, a proposal which was accepted by the Attorney-General.

loyalty of the Orangemen. If we can but instil a little sober sense into them, we may perhaps weather all our difficulties.

I am happy in being able to state with considerable confidence that, taking the whole surface of Ireland together, there is ample food until the next harvest; at the same time there are districts (generally not very extensive) in which there is not a single sound potato. If you give us an early and liberal supply of money for public works, and thereby enable us to employ the people—if you are quick with your remedial Bills—I shall hope to fend off insurrection, and, if we can reach the summer without it, Ireland may yet prosper.

I had intended to write to Lord Grey, but I found that I had not time. Of course you will communicate this to him.

Lord Melbourne to the Marquess of Anglesey. Confidential. Home Office, March 31, 1831.

In your letter, received yesterday by Lord Grey, I observe that you say towards the conclusion of it that the course to be observed towards O'Connell will require the most serious consideration of the Government. Now I cannot help immediately writing to you my distinct and decided opinion that, though I know the matter to be one of the highest importance and which may lead to the most serious consequences, yet that there is but one line to be taken, and that such a one as admits neither of doubt nor of question. The law must proceed in its usual and accustomed course. You must bring him up for judgment, leave the Court to pronounce such sentence as to it seems good, and the sentence so pronounced must be carried into execution, as it would be in the case of any other delinquent. After the language which has been held by the Irish govern-

ment, after the measures which have been adopted, and pledged as you are over and over again to enforce the law, any shrinking at this moment, any compromise, any legal schemes or device to avoid the difficulty, would, in my opinion, cover all of us who have engaged in these transactions with the greatest and most indelible ignominy. If you are, as I trust you are, of this opinion, you will do well to express it strongly to Lord Grey and the Government here. The question is now brought to issue whether O'Connell or the King's Lieutenant is to govern Ireland; and it is a question which in my apprehension it is worth while to try at any risk which can possibly be apprehended from bringing it to a decision.

It was, however, as will be seen, decided by the majority of the Cabinet that the Irish Attorney-General should consent to the postponement of the trial, and the Act under which O'Connell had been convicted expiring with the dissolution, sentence was never pronounced. The compromise was a mistake, and it would appear from the following letter that it was made against Lord Melbourne's wishes :—

Lord Melbourne to the Marquess of Anglesey. Home Office, April 4, 1831.

We had yesterday a Cabinet, at which the conduct to be pursued towards O'Connell was fully discussed, and the same conclusion come to as at the meeting which we before had at Brougham's, and at which were present the Chancellor, Crampton,[1] Stanley, and myself—viz. that if O'Connell should, when he comes up for judgment, propose to move in arrest of judgment, this proposal should be acceded to by the Attorney-General, and that thus the necessary delay of hearing the arguments, &c., might postpone the final sentence

[1] Mr. Philip Crampton became Solicitor-General for Ireland in the place of Doherty.

for a considerable period of time. This appears to me to be the utmost extremity to which it is possible to go. If he does not do this, the proceedings must in my opinion go on in their usual course. I see no other alternative. If the Government should at this moment show any disposition to alter its tone, or to escape from the effect of its own measures, the Protestants will lose all confidence in it, and the Roman Catholics, though they may not venture to express their disapprobation so loudly, will feel it as deeply, inasmuch as they will see no hope of ever escaping from the despotic domination to which they are at present subjected, and under which those of them who have either sense or spirit must necessarily be impatient. I am well aware of the difficulties and even dangers which await you if you go forward, but in my judgment they will be found to be greatly exaggerated, and, even admitting them to their fullest extent, they are as nothing in the balance when weighed against the greater perils of anything which resembles retractation. If you and Plunket and the Attorney-General are of this opinion, a pretty strong expression of it would be of service and not unseasonable.

I hope the precautions which you have taken will restore something like a state of order in Clare. I dare say the excitement for the repeal of the Union may subside. It is very artificial, and founded upon no real grounds; but the question which you mention as likely to take its place is one of a most fearful and appalling character, too probable, I fear me, to arise, quite different in its nature, produced by real grievance and suffering, and altogether of such an extent and difficulty that I see no means of dealing with it safely either by force or by conciliation. Adieu.

The state of portions of Ireland, especially the counties of Clare, Limerick, Galway, and Roscommon, had convinced Lord Melbourne several weeks before that a stringent measure was necessary for the preservation of peace. In Clare, wrote Lord Anglesey in answer to his enquiries, there was exhibited 'distinct evidence of the existence of organised and associated bodies, comprising almost the whole population of the county, united by oaths, acting in concert, and at the same time prescribing regulations destructive of the right of property, and enforcing obedience to them through the exercise of lawless force or the influence of a general and prevailing system of intimidation.' In other words, the Whitefeet and the Blackfeet were supreme, and the tithe war had entered upon its active stage. Lord Melbourne, however, seems to have laid greater stress upon the political agitation.

Lord Melbourne to the Marquess of Anglesey. Secret and confidential. Home Office, February 26, 1831.

I HAVE received your two last letters, together with the report which has been transmitted to Stanley, and have lost no time in laying all these documents before his Majesty and also before my colleagues. All highly approve of the measures you have taken, and trust that they will have the effect of preventing tumults from spreading very extensively or assuming a very serious aspect. The statements of the distress of the country appear to be frightful, but it will, of course, engage your active attention, and receive, under proper precautions, every alleviation which the Government is capable of affording.

The question has not yet been discussed in the Cabinet, but I can have no doubt that the decision will be to propose to Parliament the renewal of 9 Geo. IV. c. 1. It appears to me that without the possession of the powers conferred by that Act no Lord Lieutenant on your side, nor no Ministry on this side of the water could venture to be responsible for the tranquillity o

Ireland, or for the continuance of its connection with Great Britain.

It appears to me, however, upon consideration of the subject, and writing to you in strict confidence entirely from myself and without consultation with any others, that even this law, coupled with the other laws at present in force to which you have adverted, will be insufficient to maintain the tranquillity and secure the safety of Ireland, unless some measure can be adopted which will effectually prevent and suppress the system of perpetual excitement and irritation which is at present so sedulously and perseveringly acted upon in that country. If Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Steele, Mr. Costello,[1] or anyone who thinks proper, is to possess the power, as is the case at present, of seizing advantage of every moment of discontented feeling, of taking an active and prominent part in every election, of making circuits of the whole country, and of convoking of their own authority public meetings upon any subject in every city, county, and district, although he may possess no property nor any natural connection whatever with such place, I do not see how the public mind can ever be expected to subside into contentment, or how any other result is to be looked for but perpetual disquietude, increased political violence, and ultimately revolt and civil war. I am well aware how difficult it is, consistently with the general principles of our law, to frame any enactment which shall meet this great and growing evil. The Insurrection Act has no provision suited to the emergency. It is directed principally against nocturnal outrages. The acts we have to guard against are committed in the face of day. The

[1] Tom Steele, afterwards 'Head Pacificator' of the Repeal Association, and Pat Costello were two of O'Connell's most active supporters.

suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act is a measure from its nature necessarily of a temporary character, and adapted only to a crisis which is expected speedily to be determined. I am afraid this hope cannot be entertained upon this occasion. It was always my opinion, notwithstanding the clamour raised against the measure, that the provisions of the Act generally called by the name of the Seditious Meetings Bill, were in themselves highly reasonable and expedient, and such as ought to form a part of the perpetual code of every people who wished to live in peace and security under a popular government. The object of this law was to prevent any men, or set of men, from going at any time into any place, and then, of their own authority, convoking a meeting of the populace of that place to discuss any measure which it seemed good to them to propose for discussion. The mode of attaining this object was by requiring that there should be some authority for holding a meeting founded in the natural weight and respectability of the community, such as the consent of the Lord Lieutenant, the High Sheriff, or a requisition signed by a majority of the Grand Jury or a certain number of freeholders. I do not say that the enactments of this Bill would suit Ireland, or that they would be effectual for the purpose I have in view; but I wish you would call the attention of the Lord Lieutenant and Attorney-General to the subject, and consult with them whether, in the first place, the evil which I point out is not, after all the measures which have been taken with such success, still formidable, and whether in order to meet it some blow must not be struck in the quarter which I have designated. I again repeat that I write this entirely from myself for the purpose of bringing the subject under your consideration, and not in

consequence of consultation with my colleagues, but rather with a view of obtaining information and devising measures which may hereafter be submitted to them.

The Government, however, was otherwise engaged, and the tithe war continued through the whole of 1831, reports of organised riots, outrages on tithe proctors, and pitched battles with the police pouring into the Home Office with monotonous regularity. The earlier months of 1832 were, however, devoted to a considerable extent to Irish affairs, and, though the Government still shrank from coercion, Mr. Stanley carried his Education Bill, and a stop-gap Tithe Bill, by which the Ministry was authorised to advance 60,000*l.* to the distressed Irish clergy, and empowered to collect the arrears of tithe. A Jury Bill was also passed, concerning the expedience of which Lord Melbourne had some doubt. Would not the result be, he asked Sir William Gosset, to put on juries 'barbarians from the mountains, who neither speak English nor know right from wrong'?

The new Tithe Bill was, however, as difficult to enforce as its predecessors, and Lord Anglesey's heart began to fail him.

Lord Melbourne to the Marquess of Anglesey. Private. South Street, June 30, 1832.

I OUGHT before this to have noticed your letter of the 24th inst., with the enclosures. I was inclined at first to think but lightly of the burning turfs, but if Vivian's[1] suggestion be true, that it is a scheme for ascertaining how quickly intelligence may be transmitted throughout the whole of the country—that is, in other words, how soon the whole of the Roman Catholic population may be called upon to rise—it must be admitted to be rather a formidable prognostic.

I am sorry you think the measures which have been taken respecting tithe ill-advised. I own that I, on the other hand, cannot help being of opinion that we have

[1] Sir Hussey Vivian was Commander of the Forces in Ireland.

been rather slack and inactive in this matter, and that steps of a more decisive character ought to have been adopted long ago. Depend upon it, if the abolition of this payment is effected by force, the violence which has been so successful will immediately be extended farther. It is according to human nature and common sense that it should be so. Rents, taxes, &c., may be very well paid now—probably the better because the country is relieved from the tithe; but the Irish, who are the most conspiring people on the face of the earth, have sagacity enough to fight one point at a time, and to collect and combine all their strength for the purpose of carrying one sensible object. But, this being attained, arguments, not perhaps so strong, or perhaps you will say so sound, as in the case of tithe, but sufficiently plausible to combine and justify resistance to other demands, will easily be found by the perverse and interested ingenuity of the popular leaders. Give the Bill fair play; act with judgment and caution, but act with firmness. Above all, do not despond, nor suppose that the object cannot be effected. You have a very violent and a very noisy people to deal with, but not a very courageous people, particularly not morally courageous; and I have still hopes that the way may be prepared for a more satisfactory settlement of the question, as it undoubtedly ought to be, by a re-establishment of the authority of the law, which is at present despised and trodden under foot. That it should be so whilst I have anything to do with the Government gives me, I own, great pain, and affects me with a feeling of deep humiliation and disgrace. There is hardly any conceivable situation in which I would not rather be placed.

The same to the same. Secret. Whitehall, July 10, 1832.

LORD PLUNKET has communicated to me and to Lord Grey and to Mr. Stanley the letter which he has received from you this morning.

We entirely agree with you that it is absolutely necessary to act with firmness, promptitude, and energy. Such a meeting as that which is described as to have taken place at Mylterard on the 5th inst. cannot be tolerated. The proceedings which took place upon that occasion amount to the establishment of a tyranny of the most oppressive character, and vested in such hands as are sure to employ it in the most violent and capricious manner. Lord Plunket will immediately see Mr. Crampton for the purpose of consulting upon the form of proclamation forbidding all such illegal acts, and warning his Majesty's subjects not to take part in them. If this public injunction be disregarded, it will be necessary to prevent by force all such tumultuous assemblies, and to disperse them if they should take place. Lord Plunket will immediately take measures respecting the magistrates whose conduct you have brought under his consideration, and will write to you by to-night's post generally upon the subject of your letter.

P.S.—Nothing which I have stated in the above letter is intended in the slightest to fetter you in the adoption of any discretional measures which you may think the immediate exigency of the circumstances calls upon you to take, or to imply that any previous proclamation is absolutely necessary before measures are taken against an illegal assembly. If such proclamation be recommended, it is only for the sake of greater precaution and in order to put those who violate the law more completely and manifestly in the wrong.

The same to the same. Private. Whitehall, July 12, 1832.

IT appears to me that not only those magistrates who take the chair, make violent speeches, and otherwise bear prominent parts at illegal meetings, or at meetings which become illegal in the course of them, but also those who are guilty of the base, interested, pusillanimous, and unworthy conduct of yielding to the dictation of numbers and violence, of promising neither to pay nor receive tithe any more, ought to be removed from the magistracy, as being utterly unfit either to sustain the character or discharge the duties of that situation. For this purpose I wish you would direct either me or the Lord Chancellor of Ireland to be informed of the names of any Justices of the Peace who may so demean themselves. I observe in the *Morning Register* of the 10th inst. reports of two meetings of a very violent character, the one at Ballyriggan, and the other in the united parishes of Foniglas and St. Margaret's. If either W. O'Reilly, Esq., who took the chair at the former meeting, or James Savage, Esq., who presided at the latter, or if any of the speakers at either of the meetings, and more particularly Mr. Bernard Shaw, who is described as a Protestant and the largest landowner in the parish, be in the Commission of the Peace, there appears to me to be little doubt of the manner in which they ought to be dealt with.

During the winter months the Cabinet, despite the reluctance of Lord Durham and Lord Althorp, determined to introduce a stringent measure of coercion.

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Stanley. Private. Whitehall, December 20, 1832.

I DARE say Lord Grey has already written to you to express his anxiety upon the state of Ireland. Indeed, the whole of the Cabinet seem impressed with the necessity of some speedy and effectual measures. You have

yourself already stated more than once that such would be required. From the reports which Gosset transmits it appears that the state of the country is becoming worse every day; outrages more frequent, violence more declared, magistrates and all who are opposed to rapine and confusion more and more intimidated. The attacks upon houses seem to be mostly for the end of obtaining arms, always, in the opinion of those who know Ireland, the worst symptom that can exhibit itself. Lord Anglesey, I see by the papers—for I have received no official information—has proclaimed the county of Kilkenny and part of the county of Cork under the Peace Preservation Act, but it cannot be hoped that this measure will be effectual in the present state of those counties. What is to be done? You propose the Insurrection Act to be carried into effect by a jury. Will the magistrates act under it, either with or without a jury? Will juries in the present state of the country convict under a law which bears so odious a name and character? All these doubts and apprehensions make one turn to the more effectual and decisive measure of martial law, and it really appears to me that the state of some of the counties is such as would justify the proclamation of it in sense and reason, if not in law. But, supposing it proclaimed, have we force enough to carry it into effect? Pray let me know whether you are returning to Ireland, and, if you are, let me have, as soon as possible, your opinion upon these subjects.

Lord Melbourne to the Marquess of Anglesey. South Street, December 22, 1832.

THE letters which your Excellency has for some time past addressed to Earl Grey, as well as the reports from the magistrates and inspectors of police which have been transmitted to my office from that of your Excellency's Chief

Secretary, have given such representations of the disturbed and insurrectionary state of many counties of the province of Leinster, as well as of the county of Cork, as must necessarily occasion the deepest anxiety and excite the most lively apprehension upon the part of his Majesty's Government. The dispersion of the Ministers, occasioned by the General Election, has unavoidably prevented us from holding a Cabinet Council upon this subject; but the Lord Chancellor, Lord Grey, and myself had a meeting upon it yesterday, at which, after full consideration and consultation, it was determined that I should immediately write to your Excellency, to assure you that we entirely participate in the apprehensions which your Excellency entertains of serious ultimate mischief, and in the conviction that speedy and effectual measures are required for the preservation of the public tranquillity and the maintenance of the authority of the law in Ireland.

I am directed further to acquaint your Excellency that we shall be most happy to receive such suggestions as your Excellency's experience of that country and better consideration of its state and circumstances may enable you to offer, and we do not doubt that the rest of his Majesty's servants will be ready to concur with us in proposing to Parliament, at its meeting, the adoption of such measures as may seem best calculated to arrest the dangers with which that portion of his Majesty's dominions is at present threatened.

It occurred to us that it would be advisable that your Excellency should take the opinion of the law officers upon the 21–2 Geo. III. c. 11, sec. 16, as to whether the present state of things existing in Ireland, or in any part of it, is such as would authorise and justify your Excellency in suspending the operation of

that Act by proclamation, according to the provisions of the last section of it.

The evident terror and panic which prevail amongst the magistrates, gentry, and farmers, particularly of the county of Kilkenny, lead us to doubt whether the provisions of the Insurrection Act, or of any law of that character, supposing it were thought wise to enact it, could be carried into effect—at least, in the manner in which they were heretofore accustomed to be executed. These considerations naturally induced us to advert to the more effectual measure of the proclamation of martial law. I have before transmitted to your Excellency a copy of a letter from Sir Robert Peel to Lord Francis Leveson Gower, which treats of the legal character of such a proceeding, and of the circumstances which might be considered to authorise it. In addition to this document I beg leave to call your Excellency's attention to Mr. Pelham's letter to General Lake, dated March 3, 1797, and to Mr. Pelham's letter to Lord Carhampton, dated May 18 in the same year. In a matter of such moment and importance your Excellency will, no doubt, avail yourself of the experience and talents of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and it will be for your Excellency to consider whether the frequency of outrage, the insecurity of life, the defiance of all authority, and the conspiracy, or, rather, the open combinations against the law, which at present prevail in Ireland, are sufficient to justify the adoption of measures similar to those which were taken by the Irish government at the period to which I have referred your Excellency.

The King to Lord Melbourne.

THE King cannot delay expressing to Viscount Melbourne the extreme indignation with which

Brighton, January 6, 1833. he has this day noticed in the paper (which he encloses) the correspondence which has passed between Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Dwyer respecting the establishment of a 'National Council' in Dublin, and the appellation of 'Irish Volunteers' to be given to the Irish Political Union. His Majesty is aware that the consideration of his Government is about to be given to the introduction of strong repressive measures applicable to the general state of Ireland, but he is conscious that these *individual* acts of the Irish Political Union and of Mr. O'Connell call for the immediate interposition of his Government, as they appear to his Majesty to be, if not overt acts of rebellion, yet the avowal of a determination to proceed to that length, and to use every endeavour to excite and to embody a feeling and a spirit of opposition to the Government. Indeed, if anything has been wanting to satisfy his Majesty of the dangerous and rebellious tendency of political unions in the *United Kingdom*, the proceeding to which he now calls the attention of Viscount Melbourne would complete the catalogue.

In March a general insurrection throughout the South was anticipated, but Mr. Stanley pointed out that the evidence was of a somewhat doubtful character; and so it proved.

Lord Melbourne to the Marquess of Anglesey. Whitehall, March 26, 1833. I HAVE this morning received yours of the 26th inst. with the enclosures. I immediately submitted them to Lord Grey and Stanley, and I must of course send them to the King. I will take care that the original letters are returned. We agree entirely with you in the view you have taken of the subject. The concentrating the police and the military would be to give up the country from which they would be withdrawn to the Whitefeet; but, of

course, it must be done if a formidable insurrection should be threatened. Any advice or instructions to you upon such a subject would be absurd, nor indeed could they be given to any one from such a distance, as everything must depend upon local information and immediate circumstances. I have seen Fitzroy Somerset, who says that in case of emergency a regiment might be sent speedily from Devonport, and as both the North of England and Scotland are now quite tranquil troops might be safely spared from them both.

Mr. Stanley to Lord Melbourne. Carlton Gardens, March 26, 1833.

I THINK you should send the papers to the King. The difference between Macdonnell and Douglas is easily accounted for. Macdonnell's information referred only to the South and chiefly to the co. Tipperary; but the discrepancy between Miller (who is Inspector-General for the whole Southern division) and Douglas is not so intelligible. Douglas is very active and useful and very jealous of Miller, and would not dislike the *éclat* of a grand discovery. I should be curious to hear the result of his informer's visit,[1] if it takes place, to the houses where he says he can prove the organisation. In the meantime I am inclined to think that Miller's is the more probable view of the matter: that there is a general organisation for purposes of violence and intimidation connected with local grievances, and that the priests—who are connected with O'Connell from religious and political motives, and

[1] Lord Melbourne's previous experience caused him to view with extreme suspicion the evidence of informers. A mysterious person styled Z—— appears frequently in the correspondence with the Castle, in whose revelations Mr. Stanley was inclined to place confidence. Lord Melbourne, however, generally made light of them, as coming from a polluted source.

with the people, whom they are obliged to join and lead, from *pecuniary* considerations—form the link between what he terms the 'political and prædial agitations,' and that they can at any time, and are not indisposed to, excite their parishioners to a manifestation of their physical force; but I do not believe that they are at all prepared to undertake anything like a systematic insurrection, or that they have either leaders or military discipline to render them the least formidable. I think, however, that Sir Hussey Vivian has on all occasions underrated the amount of arms in the possession of the peasantry.

Meanwhile the fiery eloquence of Mr. Stanley had been carrying the Coercion Bill through the House of Commons.

Lord Melbourne to the Marquess of Anglesey. Whitehall, April 2, 1833.

We last night agreed to the amendments made by the House of Commons in the Bill for the suppression of disturbances in Ireland; so it may be considered as passed. I have directed as many copies as can be obtained to be sent to you by to-night's post. I am afraid that some of the alterations which have been made will impair its efficiency and the facility of its working; but of that you will be better able to form a judgment in Ireland when you see the precise provisions of it. At any rate, the two great points are obtained—the putting down illegal seditious bodies, and the making it actually unlawful to be out by night in a proclaimed district. I have not seen Lord Hill to-day, but I do not doubt that he has taken measures such as will enable him to send you officers with all convenient speed. I have not the Bill before me, and therefore may be mistaken, but I fear that the necessity of being provided with lists of the inmates of houses will occasion delay in carrying the

measure into execution, and promptitude is the soul of a measure of this character.

The passing of the Coercion Bill was followed by two changes in the Irish Administration—Lord Anglesey retiring in favour of Lord Wellesley, after that Lord Melbourne had declined the Lord Lieutenancy, and Mr. Stanley, who went to the Colonial Office, being replaced by Mr. Littleton. The state of affairs in Ireland seemed to have improved.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Melbourne. Golden Grove, September 28, 1833.

It is impossible to traverse Ireland without observing strong symptoms of improvement, both in public communications and the lodging and even clothing of the people. Many undertakings abandoned last year have been taken up again since the passing of the Coercion Bill, and if even the comparative state of quiet it now enjoys (it is far from perfect, for, as you mention, there are occasional burnings and outrages on property) can be maintained for three years the stride it will make will be immense. Those who know O'Connell think he meditates some new tack before winter. He is (for him) unusually reserved, and there are growing symptoms of a flirtation between him and some of the Conservative leaders, each party trusting probably to outwit the other in the end if they can answer the common purpose of alarming the Government for the moment. Repeal is, however, never mentioned but at political meetings, to answer some occasional purpose. Doyle's [1] health is supposed to be such as to prevent his again taking any active part; which is fortunate when a Catholic provision comes to be thought of, as I trust it will soon. It would not be difficult, I think, to procure one for the training of schoolmasters, which might answer very important political ends, as well as those of education.

[1] Dr. Doyle was Bishop of Kildare and Loughlin.

The difficulties of collecting tithe in the face of inveterate resistance proved, however, very great, and in 1833 the arrears amounted to 1,200,000*l.*

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Littleton. Private. South Street, August 29, 1833.

I YESTERDAY evening submitted to the Cabinet, according to your desire, the memorandum which you had transmitted to me relating to the employment of the military force and the police in cases of resistance to the collection of tithe. The Cabinet entirely agree with you that this is a very important question; it is also a question of some difficulty, and for the determination of which it is impossible to lay down definite rules or give precise instructions beforehand, as the course which it may be prudent to pursue must depend very much upon the general aspect of affairs, and the particular circumstances of each case which may be brought under the consideration of the Irish government.

It is certainly the anxious hope of his Majesty's Ministers that all necessity for collecting the arrears of tithe now due or becoming due, and all the hazards attending upon such collection, may be avoided by the acceptance on the part of the clergy of the terms offered to them by the Act which has just been passed for their relief; but if this unfortunately should not be the case, it appears to me impossible that the Government can, consistently with its duty as a government, refuse its assistance and protection to those of them who shall be obstructed or endangered in the prosecution of their legal claims. . . .

Such having been the state of this matter previous to the year 1830 and since,[1] it remains to consider the

[1] That bodies of soldiers and constables actually escorted and accompanied the process-servers.

situation in which we are placed at the present moment, and it is impossible not to admit that situation to be much changed by the Act which has recently received the sanction of the legislature. By that Act the Parliament and the Government admit that they wish to avoid the necessity of levying the arrears of tithe for the last two years and for the present; they offer to the tithe-owner an alternative. He may decline it; he may refuse to make the sacrifice required; he may stand upon his legal right—and his legal right being unquestionable, it is impossible that the Government should say that they will stand by and see it violated without interfering either to assist or protect him; at the same time, he cannot in justice expect that aid should be afforded with the same ease and readiness as it has been of late, when it has been granted, in fact, upon general political principles and for the purpose of putting down a movement so general and so combined as to amount almost to insurrection.

Upon the whole, the general result and the final opinion of the Cabinet is—1st, that you cannot lay down that you will leave every tithe-owner who may not take the benefit of the Act of Parliament, in case his claims should be resisted, to his mere legal remedy and to the means of securing it which he may be able to command; 2nd, that in deciding upon granting assistance, you should resort to the principles upon which the governments of Ireland acted previous to the year 1830—that the circumstances of each case in which aid is asked should be carefully considered, that when it appears certain that the process cannot be served without danger of resistance, every advice and even remonstrance with the tithe-owner should be employed to

induce him to adopt the more moderate course. If such remonstrance should prove unavailing, he should be told that he proceeds upon his own responsibility, and if he still persists, precautions should be taken for restoring the public peace in case it should be interrupted; but the process-server or other officer should not be actually escorted either by the troops or the police.

The same to the same. October 13, 1833.

I WROTE the above yesterday evening. This morning's post has brought me yours of the 15th. I am very glad to learn your opinion upon the state of the North, the Orange lodges, &c. You know enough of my opinion to know that I should always consider it a great advantage to be relieved from the necessity of taking strong measures in that quarter. We must act towards the Protestants with firmness and justice, but at the same time with caution and moderation, and with the utmost tenderness and consideration, not only for their feelings but even for their prejudices. This instance of these reports from the North appears to me to afford a proof of the impossibility of conducting the government of Ireland from hence, as it has of late years been the fashion to suggest. The person who had to direct measures would either err from imperfect and incorrect information or, if he waited to obtain fuller intelligence, would be too late for the occasion.

A new Tithe Bill was in preparation, but Lord Melbourne does not seem to have anticipated much benefit from it. 'You know,' he wrote to Mr. Littleton on September 24, 'my general opinion that the spirit of combination, violence, and encroachment will neither be satisfied nor mitigated by the concessions which have been made to it, nor by any which may be made.' Lord Lansdowne's sentiments were of much the same nature.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Melbourne. Bowood, December 13, 1833.

I HAVE read attentively the printed communication you have forwarded to me, and I presume to the rest of the Cabinet, containing some additional suggestions from Lord Wellesley and Littleton on the subject of the extinction of tithes in Ireland.

I was not at all surprised to find that some alteration of the former plan was judged necessary to secure their income to the clergy, as it seemed to me impossible on the first blush of it that a capital founded on sixteen years' purchase could be so vested or arranged as to yield a revenue approaching even within 13 per cent. to their actual receipts.

It appears to me, however, that the change now proposed, and which it is expected will meet this difficulty, involves rather a serious objection in principle. It is intended to make the amount of purchase or commutation depend upon the supposed value of the tithes in different quarters; but how is this difference of value to be estimated? By the fact of the tithe having been in parts of the country 'paid freely,' and in others been the subject of a 'violent and inveterate resistance'? Will not this be proclaiming in Ireland, with respect to other alleged burdens and grievances, that the measure of resistance will be taken as a measure of relief?—an objection that I remember taking last year to one of the plans for the payment of arrears, and which was then generally felt by the Cabinet. I confess I do not see how the inequality can be justified short of going the full length of recognising one part of Ireland as Catholic and the other as Protestant; but I do not know that we or the country are prepared for this, and the admission would imply a still greater diminution in the income of the Church of England, together with

a corresponding provision for the Roman Catholic clergy.

I think it right to state this objection, as it occurs to me strongly; but if, contrary to any expectation, this last suggestion is found to smoothe difficulties, I certainly shall be glad to see the question settled any way, and as an individual proprietor in that part of the country where redemption can be effected on the easiest terms, can have no reason to be dissatisfied with it.

During the winter the state of Ireland, though less deplorable than in former years, was still far from satisfactory. Lord Melbourne wrote to Mr. Littleton on December 27:—

The report of the province of Leinster, compared with that for the same period of the last year, is undoubtedly satisfactory, and upon the face of it it appears to me to be impossible to deny the beneficial effect of the Coercion Act, not only upon the county of Kilkenny, in which it has been called into operation, but also upon the neighbouring counties of Carlow and Tipperary; at the same time, however, that this representation, comparatively considered, may be held to be encouraging, taken by itself it certainly presents anything but a cheering prospect. Two hundred and ninety-two offences committed in the space of one month, all of them of a serious complexion and many of them of an insurrectionary character, prove that we are yet very far from having restored order and security in that part of the country. I entirely agree with the Inspector-General of that province that more precaution should be used by the magistrates in granting licences for the holding of arms; but I was extremely surprised to read in his observations that he himself does not attach much importance to the possession of firearms by the peasantry.

It has always appeared to me that this was one of the worst peculiarities of Ireland, the very point in which it differs from England the most to its own disadvantage. Whether the desire to obtain arms be a cause or an effect I stop not to enquire, but sure I am that this is the most evil symptom of the diseased state of the country, and the circumstance which most leads to and encourages both public tumult and private outrage, and renders both more bloody and destructive than in other countries. I feel convinced that no permanent good will be effected until this habit is greatly checked and diminished, and it is the duty of every public officer to discourage and discountenance it by every means in his power.

And he wrote to Lord Wellesley on January 4:—

I much lament that you seem to entertain so unfavourable an opinion of the general state of the country. I wish I could myself think that your forebodings in this respect were not well founded. I am not equal to the attempt to enter upon a subject of such magnitude at present. The dependencies and provinces of great monarchies have always been apt to grow too great and too strong to be governed by the mother state, and that, perhaps, exactly in proportion to the degree in which their true interest has been consulted, and their prosperity has been suffered to develop itself. This has been the case with absolute despotisms, and I am afraid that governments of a popular character will not be found to be exempt from the same condition.

In this state of affairs the renewal of the Coercion Bill was inevitable, and, as is well known, the circumstances attending the renewal produced the downfall of the Grey administration. As to Lord Melbourne's share in the imbroglio there is

nothing much to relate. It is unnecessary to retell, for the hundredth and first time, the events of the tempestuous session of 1834, and it is sufficient to say that, when the Bill came under the consideration of the Cabinet, he and Lord Grey were strongly in favour of its reintroduction in its integrity. He was, therefore, extremely angry with Lord Wellesley's famous letter of June 19, in which the Lord Lieutenant announced that he did not wish the clauses to be renewed enabling him to suppress public meetings; and he was additionally angry because the letter was written to the Prime Minister and not, in the ordinary course, to himself.[1] He swallowed his objections, however, and it was Lord Grey's determination to carry the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill, combined with Mr. Littleton's indiscreet communication with O'Connell, which caused the resignation of Lord Althorp, and the consequent break-up of the Ministry. Lord Melbourne, to all outward appearance, accepted the catastrophe with great philosophy, and went with a party of ladies down the river. But he never forgave Lord Wellesley, or Lord Brougham the chief adviser of Lord Wellesley, their share in the transactions, and it is to the events of this period that must be attributed his relentless determination to exclude those statesmen from any Ministry of which he was the chief.

[1] The best account of the transactions is to be found in Lord Hatherton's (Mr. Littleton's) Memoir on the subject, edited by Mr. Reeve. It is there stated by Lord Hatherton that Lord Wellesley addressed his letter to Lord Grey because Lord Melbourne had not answered his previous letters. The omission is perfectly possible, as Lord Melbourne was not the most methodical of correspondents; but at the same time it is not easy to reconcile the statement with a sentence in Lord Wellesley's letter of July 3: 'I wrote to Lord Grey expressly for the purpose of keeping the communication out of the official channels.'

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST MELBOURNE ADMINISTRATION

JULY—NOVEMBER 1834

ON the day after Lord Grey's resignation Lord Melbourne was summoned by the King to give his advice on the state of affairs. The selection does not seem to have taken many people by surprise; indeed, Lord Durham had prophesied a year before that Melbourne would be Grey's successor. Having ascertained that Lord Lansdowne would not accept the Premiership, and knowing full well that Lord Althorp was utterly unwilling to assume the post of honour, he obeyed the royal commands with characteristic nonchalance. To his private secretary, Tom Young, he said that 'he thought it a damned bore, and that he was in many minds what he should do—be Minister or no.' But he was persuaded by that worthy's unanswerable reply: 'Why, damn it, such a position was never occupied by any Greek or Roman, and, if it only lasts two months, it is worth while to have been Prime Minister of England.'[1] The King's wishes, as is well known, were that he should attempt to form a coalition Ministry with the Duke, Sir Robert Peel, and Mr. Stanley. But Lord Melbourne had far too much common sense to accede to an arrangement so excellent in theory, so unworkable in practice. The gist of his often-quoted reply is to be found in the following passage:—[2]

> The distinguished individuals enumerated by your Majesty, the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Stanley, have all and each of them recently expressed,

[1] *Greville*, iii. 126. Greville gives a very unfavourable sketch of Tom Young's character, but Hayward attributes to him considerable abilities and great usefulness.

[2] Lord Melbourne's reply was dated July 10.

not only general want of confidence in your Majesty's government, but the strongest objections, founded upon principle, to measures of great importance, either introduced into Parliament or adopted by virtue of your Majesty's prerogative: to the Bill for the better collection of tithes in Ireland, and to the Commission for an enquiry into the state of religion in that country. Both these measures, particularly the last, Viscount Melbourne considers vital and essential in the present state of public feeling and opinion. Would it be then fair in Viscount Melbourne to offer to these distinguished individuals the appearance of a negotiation in which Viscount Melbourne would have everything to demand and nothing to concede?

Much to his disgust, the King was accordingly obliged to fall back upon the Whigs, and Lord Melbourne, having overcome the reluctance of Lord Althorp—'the tortoise on whom the world reposed'—to continue in office, was able, on the 15th, to express his readiness, and that of his colleagues, to place their services at the King's disposal.

Lord Melbourne to the King. South Street, July 15, 1834.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and respectfully acquaints your Majesty that, in consequence of the audience with which he was honoured by your Majesty on the 13th inst., he yesterday evening called together those of your Majesty's confidential servants who have not actually resigned their offices, and submitted to them the paper which your Majesty has been pleased to place in Viscount Melbourne's hands, and also his recollection of the conversation which passed upon the occasion. Viscount Melbourne is charged by them all to express their attachment and devotion to your Majesty's person and government, and their readiness to place their ser-

vices at your Majesty's disposal, subject to such explanations as Viscount Melbourne is authorised to offer of certain passages in your Majesty's gracious communication, and which he believes, from his recollection of your Majesty's observations on Monday last, to be entirely consonant with your Majesty's feelings and intentions.

With respect to the general observations made in the paper referred to, Viscount Melbourne will only state that he perceives their purport to be that your Majesty's government is to be conducted upon the principle of firmly maintaining the civil and religious establishments of the country, subject to such prudent and well-considered but effectual reformation as may render them more suited to their own purposes, more commensurate with their objects, as may be dictated by sound policy, and as are called for by a majority of the respectable part of the community.

To the distinct questions put by your Majesty, your Majesty has a right to expect and it is Viscount Melbourne's duty to offer a clear and distinct reply. To the first—viz. What are the materials, independently of any combination of parties, from which, in the opinion of Viscount Melbourne, an administration can be formed? and which Viscount Melbourne understands as a direction to him to lay before your Majesty a plan of administration, Viscount Melbourne humbly proposes that Viscount Duncannon should be called up to the House of Lords, and should be entrusted with the seals of the Home Department, and that the office of First Commissioner of Woods and Forests should be filled by Sir John Cam Hobhouse with a seat in the Cabinet.

With respect to the second question, Whether your Majesty can feel secure against the introduction of any

of those whose principles and views your Majesty dreads and deprecates? Viscount Melbourne would fain hope that his answer to the former question, in which he proposes to your Majesty for the vacancies occasioned by the new arrangement two individuals, one of whom is at present and the other recently has been in your Majesty's service, and only left it from accidental circumstances,[1] will be a sufficient proof that there is no wish to do anything but that which may be agreeable to your Majesty, nor any desire to give to the administration a sudden change and alteration of its character. Viscount Melbourne would, however, be greatly wanting in his duty to your Majesty if he did not humbly represent that nothing appears to him to be so impolitic and dangerous (omitting other objections) as the adoption of a principle of exclusion. Such a measure, beyond any other, defeats its own end; it increases the power and popularity of those who are the objects of it, whilst it embitters their feelings and drives them into courses more violent and reckless than they would otherwise be inclined to adopt. Viscount Melbourne has no intention at present of suggesting the introduction into your Majesty's councils of any others than those whom he has named to your Majesty, but he trusts that your Majesty will allow him to reserve to himself the power of recommending to your Majesty at any future time any one of your Majesty's subjects who is qualified by law to fully serve your Majesty.

The two next questions relate to the Act for better suppressing local disturbances in Ireland, and it is Viscount Melbourne's duty to acquaint your Majesty that, from all he can learn, it has become impossible since the

[1] Sir John Hobhouse lost his seat for Middlesex on accepting the appointment of Chief Secretary for Ireland in succession to Mr. Stanley.

publication of the import of the Lord Lieutenant's private letter to Earl Grey to carry a renewal of this Act with the clauses relating to meetings. Viscount Melbourne disagrees with this opinion, he deeply laments its prevalence, but he feels himself compelled to yield to necessity, and is therefore ready to assent to the Bill, so restricted, which in that shape he apprehends there will be little difficulty in passing.

Viscount Melbourne having offered to your Majesty's questions such answers as he is enabled to give, would now have nothing further to add except the repetition of his entire devotion to your Majesty, but the last paragraph of your Majesty's paper, in which your Majesty states that 'You are satisfied that Viscount Melbourne would not undertake to preside over any administration upon the concurrence and support of which your Majesty could not rely in every effort to resist further encroachment upon the prerogative of the Crown, upon the Church Establishments in England and in Ireland, and upon the character, the responsibility, and the constitutional share in the legislature of the aristocracy of the country,' renders it necessary that Viscount Melbourne, in order to preclude the possibility of mistake, should add one or two explanatory observations. Viscount Melbourne has already stated to your Majesty his opinions upon the ecclesiastical establishment in England and in Ireland—viz. that it requires, though upon different principles, reconsideration and remodelling in both countries. To this opinion Viscount Melbourne understood himself to be fortunate enough to obtain your Majesty's assent and concurrence, and your Majesty will not, therefore, be surprised that Viscount Melbourne should be anxious to state that neither he nor his colleagues can by acquiescing in the above-

mentioned sentiments and expressions be considered to preclude themselves from offering to your Majesty such measures for the reformation of the hierarchy in England and in Ireland as may appear to be advisable, and as the result of the labours of the Commission lately issued for the enquiry into the religious state of the latter country may suggest and recommend.[1]

The business of the session was soon wound up, and Parliament was prorogued on August 15. The Coercion Bill was passed, minus the meetings clauses; the House of Lords, for the first of many times, threw out the Tithe Bill. His colleagues departed, Lord Melbourne remained in or near town, spending much of his time at Holland House, where Greville was enabled to commit to memory many admirable instances of his learning and conversational powers.[2] Meantime he was in correspondence with Lord John Russell.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Private. South

I WROTE you the note merely as a remembrancer of what had been settled at the Cabinet. I think you should certainly communicate with Mr. Waymouth and the Committee in London,

[1] Lord Melbourne's first Ministry was composed of—

Viscount Melbourne, First Lord of the Treasury.
Marquess of Lansdowne, Lord President.
Earl of Mulgrave, Lord Privy Seal.
Lord Brougham, Lord Chancellor.
Viscount Althorp, Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Viscount Palmerston, Foreign Secretary.
Mr. Spring Rice, Colonial Secretary.
Mr. C. Grant, President of the Board of Control.
Lord Auckland, First Lord of the Admiralty.
Lord John Russell, Paymaster of the Forces.
Lord Holland, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
Mr. Poulett Thomson President of the Board of Trade.
Mr. E. Ellice, Secretary for War.
Mr. Abercromby, Master of the Mint.
Sir J. C. Hobhouse, Woods and Forests.

Lord Wellesley and Mr. Littleton continued to be Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary for Ireland.

[2] *Greville*, iii. 126 *et seq.*

Street, August 16, 1834

but also that you should try to learn pretty generally from the country what are the actual views of the Dissenters and what regulations they would acquiesce in. These gentlemen in London I suspect to be only the nominal leaders, and to possess about as much weight with the Dissenters in general as the Pope does with O'Connell and the Roman Catholics in Ireland. You must, of course, be very careful in what you say yourself, but I think you will learn their views without committing the Government to any measure.

The more I think of the plan of making the legal contract of marriage merely civic, and leaving it to the discretion of the parties whether they shall superadd any religious ceremony, the more I dread its repugnance to the habits and feelings of this country. What would the Methodists and the Wesleyans particularly say to such a proposition? This is of great importance, and might, I should think, be ascertained. Adieu.

* O'Connell had returned to Ireland in a state of great indignation against the Whigs.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Private. Panshanger, August 23, 1834.

I RECIEVED your letter here yesterday. I agree with you entirely about O'Connell. Any step towards him is a measure of such importance and danger that no one ought to take it, or anything like it, without the fullest consideration, and without the agreement of all his colleagues. But I very much doubt the utility of laying this down, which in itself is obvious, as a solemn and regular resolution. The proposition will be acceded to *nem. con.* as soon as it is stated, but when that is done shall you be the least nearer your object? Those who are against this scheme, and who are for open and straightforward dealing, will abstain from anything of

the kind without any pledge. Those on the contrary who have this notion in their heads, and who are inclined to schemes, will not be in the least restrained from embarking in them by any undertaking. You will only raise an awkward discussion without any possible profit. With respect to O'Connell, I am myself strongly of opinion that nothing can be done with him. You cannot buy a man without paying something like his price. You cannot pay O'Connell's price. What I mean by his price is something adequate to his station and influence in Parliament and in the country. Now, his abilities and powers are such as to give him naturally a claim to the highest offices in the State and a large share in the government of the country. You cannot do this—at least I am not prepared to do so—and you cannot obtain him for less. It is idle to expect that such a man as he is, and after the career he has run, will sink quietly down into a subordinate equity or common law judge. He would like to have the offer for the sake of refusing it. His friends and followers will try to delude you into making the offer by all sorts of representations of its being needed, of his being tired, of his being desirous of repose, and all this sort of stuff. Besides, if you were to gain him, to make him Attorney-General for instance, you would only gain a master. Taking office would not shake his influence with the people of Ireland one jot. The people of Ireland are not such damned fools as the people of England. When they place confidence they do not withdraw it the next instant. They do not suffer their opinions to be changed in a day by the leading article of a newspaper. When they trust a man, when they are really persuaded that he has their interest at heart, they do not throw him off because he does something which they cannot immediately understand

or explain. On the contrary, they think that he probably knows what he is about, that what he does is done to serve them, and they cling to him the closer on account of any apparent inconsistency. The Ministry that lets him get into the saddle may be very sure that he will soon have a bit in their mouth and guide them as he lists.

With respect to your other schemes, which are rather large and new, do you not think that we have enough to do at present without them? I cannot for the life of me see how they will get rid of any difficulties, and they will be in themselves very great ones. I think to meddle with the army now would be absolute madness, and depend upon it there are very great objections to the alteration of the government of Ireland. These arrangements might possibly be bettered; but it seems to me, in the present position of affairs in Ireland, in this country, and with all the questions affecting the discipline of the army, it would be the height of imprudence to agitate them. Adieu.

The same to the same. South Street, September 4, 1834.

O'CONNELL'S[1] letter had, of course, engaged my attention, and I had already written both to the Chancellor and Duncannon to call theirs to it in the most serious manner. I doubt the legality of it, particularly of that part of it which recommends a general passive resistance to the payment of tithe; but, however that may be, I could not take any other view of it with reference to our position and the general state of Ireland than that which you take, and I was inclined, and am still, to come to the same conclusion as you do.

O'Connell's conduct looks very much as if he were

[1] A letter reviewing the history of Lord Grey's administration.

afraid of leaving the tithe to the legal course of collection, as if he doubted whether there would be resistance, and whether it might not be levied peaceably, and therefore he thinks it necessary thus early to begin exhortation and excitement in order to secure opposition on the part of the population. I am afraid he is too certain to be successful. It was most probable that the payment would be withheld without any successful efforts on his part; with them, I think there can be no doubt of the effect.

There appear to me to be many reasons for an early meeting. The tithe will become due in November, and as we have then every reason to apprehend serious events, it appears to me really advisable that Parliament should be sitting in order to meet them, and that we should avoid giving O'Connell the start and advantage of three months, which he invariably employs in the most active and violent agitation.

A Tithe Bill we must bring forward. We cannot, of course, acquiesce in the tithe being forcibly abolished and obtained by the landlords.

The clauses of the Coercion Bill I always apprehended would be found necessary.

The recess can hardly have brought Lord Melbourne much repose. His volatile Chancellor was touring in Scotland, arousing by his imprudent speeches a perfect storm of criticism, and winding up with a personal controversy with Lord Durham, which began at the Grey banquet at Edinburgh and continued in the pages of the *Edinburgh Review*. In September Lord Lansdowne threatened resignation because of sundry blunders in connection with the Irish Poor Law Commission.[1] In October came the destruction of the Houses of Parliament by fire; and Lord Melbourne had to point out to the King that his generous proposal to place Buckingham

[1] *Torrens*, ii. 21–24.

Palace at the disposal of the legislature could hardly with safety be accepted.

Lord Melbourne to the King. South Street, November 1, 1834.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and acknowledges your Majesty's gracious communication, which he has this morning received, upon the subject of the measures to be adopted in consequence of the recent destruction by fire of the two Houses of Parliament. There can be no question that, as your Majesty states, it is your Majesty's undoubted prerogative to appoint the place of meeting of your Parliament, but this place of meeting has been upon the present spot so invariably for so many years—ever since the time of Charles II., who summoned one Parliament under very peculiar circumstances at Oxford[1]—that, without adverting to the possibility of the House of Commons not sanctioning any arrangement made at present by voting the sums necessary to defray the expense of it, it appears to Viscount Melbourne that it would be highly unadvisable, and in some degree ungracious, to exercise this prerogative except after full consultation with the two Houses of Parliament.

Viscount Melbourne entirely concurs with your Majesty that, in order to avoid debate and diversity of opinion upon the subject as much as possible, your Majesty's Government should be prepared with a plan, which they may decisively propose to Parliament immediately upon its reassembling, and Lord Melbourne will lose no time in calling the serious attention of his colleagues to this subject as soon as they are collected together in London; but Viscount Melbourne cannot

[1] Parliament was summoned to Oxford in 1665 on account of the Great Plague.

conceal from your Majesty that he would be unwilling to be the Minister who should advise your Majesty, upon his responsibility, to remove the Houses of Parliament from their ancient and established place of assembly at Westminster.

As one reason for this determination, Viscount Melbourne begs to suggest to your Majesty that, from the knowledge which he possesses of the opinions which many members of the House of Commons entertain upon this subject, if a removal is determined upon, it is probable that your Majesty may be exposed to proposals with respect to the Palace of St. James's and Marlborough House which may be far from being agreeable to your Majesty.

But other reasons suggest themselves to the mind of Viscount Melbourne of a more grave and serious nature.

If the two Houses of Parliament are rebuilt, not upon the same site, but in the same quarter of the town in which they have so long stood, their present character, form, and extent may be in a great degree preserved. If a total removal takes place, and that to a situation where space is unlimited, it will be very difficult to avoid providing much larger accommodation for spectators as well as for members; and Viscount Melbourne need not recall to your Majesty's mind the fatal effects which large galleries filled with the multitude have had upon the deliberation of public assemblies, and consequently upon the laws and institutions of nations.

Soon afterwards Lord Melbourne learnt that Lord Durham was at loggerheads with Lord John Russell, and that the latter had obtained the King's permission to vindicate himself in Parliament.

Lord Melbourne to Sir Herbert Taylor. Confidential. Downing Street, November 4, 1834.

I UNDERSTAND that a correspondence which has recently taken place between Lord John Russell and Lord Durham relating to the previous consultations upon the Act for the Reformation of the Representation has been submitted by Lord John Russell to his Majesty, accompanied by a request that he (Lord John) may be permitted to make in his place in the House of Commons any disclosure upon this subject which may appear to him to be necessary for the vindication of his character, and that to this request his Majesty has been graciously pleased to accede.

I cannot do otherwise than seize the opportunity of the first moment of this matter coming to my knowledge to represent through you to his Majesty how extremely inconvenient this course is likely to prove, how much crimination, recrimination, and general altercation it is likely to produce, and how entirely subversive it is of all the principles upon which the Government of this country has hitherto been conducted. I understand that these letters contain statements of the opinions held and maintained in the Cabinet upon material parts of the measure by different members of the Government. What Minister will ever hereafter give his opinion freely and unreservedly upon the matters before him if he feels that he is liable, at any distance of time, to have those opinions brought to light, and to be himself arraigned at the bar of the public for having held them; and how can the public affairs be satisfactorily conducted unless the sentiments of Ministers be declared in their fullest extent, and without the least bias either of apprehension or of precaution? The publicity of debates in Parliament established of late years is, I believe, on the whole advantageous. At the same time

it must be admitted that there are attendant inconveniences, and particularly that it prevents that fearlessness and sincerity of discussion which would otherwise take place. If the arguments in the Cabinet are no longer to be protected by an impenetrable veil of secrecy, there will be no place left in the public councils for the free investigation of truth and the unshackled exercise of the understanding.

This matter seriously concerns Lord Grey as well as myself. If his Majesty has given permission to Lord John Russell, it cannot, perhaps, be retracted. But it might be proper to express a strong sense of the inconvenience of the proposed course, and an anxious hope that the present licence will not be acted upon unless it should appear to be absolutely necessary, which it is impossible that it can be, for the vindication of honour and character.

Sir Herbert Taylor to Lord Melbourne. Private. Brighton, November 5, 1834.

I HAVE felt it to be my duty not to lose a moment in bringing before the King your lordship's letter of yesterday, marked 'confidential,' and to receive his commands to convey to you his sentiments and full explanations with regard to the subject to which it relates.

His Majesty orders me to assure you that he enters most sincerely and cordially into all you say upon it, and the feeling you express, and that no man can be more sensible than he is of the mischief that is done to any Government, to its administration of the affairs of the country, and to the general interests of the nation, by the disclosures of opinions and of discussions which may have taken place in the private sittings of the members of the Government, especially when such disclosures are produced by a process of crimination and

recrimination so little suited to the circumstances in which the individuals concerned have been placed or are placed, and so wholly inconsistent with the obligations contracted by them when they become the members of a Government. His Majesty has therefore not ceased to deprecate the practice, which has more especially obtained lately, of giving great dinners, which are a sort of political assembly at which topics are introduced which necessarily lead to crimination and recrimination when parties are split as at present, and he also objects to 'itinerant' speechifying, particularly by individuals holding high offices.

The King considers it almost useless to remark that the circumstance which is more immediately the subject of your letter has arisen out of these objectionable practices, but he leaves it for those concerned to trace the evil to its origin, whether to disclosures in Parliament, at 'Gateshead,' at dinners, or in the *Edinburgh Review*.[1] The point on which his Majesty feels deeply anxious is that your lordship should feel persuaded that his Majesty had never contemplated for a moment holding correspondence with any of your colleagues, or with anyone on questions affecting the Government, of the nature and extent of which the individual at the head of the Government should be ignorant; that he has never wished to conceal anything from him, never has done so, and never will.

Applications similar to that made recently by Lord John Russell were not unusual during the administration of Lord Grey; several instances might be cited, and one of them in which Lord John Russell was the

[1] Gateshead, near Durham, was one of the places at which Lord Durham spoke. Lord Brougham had retorted on Lord Durham in the *Edinburgh Review* for October 1834.

member of the Cabinet concerned, though it was not acted upon. But those applications were invariably made with the knowledge and consent of Lord Grey, and when his Majesty received Lord John Russell's, dated at Howick on the 2nd ult., he took it for granted that his lordship had apprised you of this step, more especially as Lord Grey was privy to it; nor can his Majesty hesitate to observe that few circumstances have surprised him so much as the discovery, which appears to result from your lordship's letter, that you not only had not been apprised of the application in question, but that, up to the very day you wrote to me, you had not seen the correspondence.

I now beg to enclose it as far as I am concerned; and his Majesty has ordered me to add a letter from Lord Grey, enclosing the copy of one addressed by him to Lord Durham which the latter read at the assembly at Glasgow.

His Majesty flatters himself that you will observe in my communication made by his order the strongest desire to discourage these improper disclosures, and to inculcate the necessity of caution and discretion in the use of the permission given to Lord John Russell; and his Majesty now orders me to say that you have his full authority in his name to recall that permission, since his Majesty has learnt that the application was not made with your knowledge and concurrence.

Lord Melbourne to Sir Herbert Taylor. Confidential. Downing Street, November 6, 1834.

I BEG you will offer to his Majesty my humble and grateful thanks for the very satisfactory letter which his Majesty has commanded you to write to me in reply to mine of the 4th inst. I beg you will assure his Majesty that I always felt confident that his Majesty supposed that the

correspondence between Lord John Russell and Lord Durham had already been submitted to me, as well as the request preferred by the former to his Majesty. I am anxious also to add that I feel certain that in omitting to communicate with me upon a subject of such importance Lord John Russell acted through indiscretion and misconception, as he is utterly incapable of anything of an underhand or clandestine character. I observe in the correspondence that it is not his intention to make any public disclosure except in his place in Parliament. It appears to me, therefore, that it will be more prudent not to agitate the subject at present, but to take the chance that the lapse of a little time may possibly make him see the matter in a clearer light and alter the intention which he now professes.

I return you the correspondence, amongst which I do not perceive any copy of Lord John Russell's letter to Lord Durham, adverted to in his letter of September 21 addressed to you. I also beg leave to acknowledge with gratitude his Majesty's autograph letter on the subject of Buckingham Palace and the proposed site of the two Houses of Parliament, to which I would take an early opportunity of replying after consideration of the subject and further consultation with Lord Duncannon and Sir John Hobhouse.

Under the circumstances it was hardly to be expected that, when the death of Lord Spencer necessitated the removal of Lord Althorp to the Upper House and the choice of a new leader for the House of Commons, Lord Melbourne should write to the King in tones of decided cheerfulness:—

Downing Street, November 12, 1834. VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and is anxious in the present emergency to wait upon your Majesty, and to receive your Majesty's commands.

Your Majesty will recollect that the Government in its present form was mainly founded upon the personal weight and influence possessed by Earl Spencer in the House of Commons, and upon the arrangement which placed in his hands the conduct of the business of Government in that assembly. That foundation is now withdrawn by the elevation of that nobleman to the House of Peers; and in the new and altered circumstances it is for your Majesty to consider whether it is your pleasure to authorise Viscount Melbourne to make such fresh arrangements as may enable your Majesty's present servants to continue to conduct the affairs of the country, or whether your Majesty deems it advisable to adopt any other course.

Viscount Melbourne accepted the high and responsible office which he at present holds because he thought that at that moment it was in his power to render service to your Majesty and the country. Viscount Melbourne will never abandon your Majesty; his humble services will always be at your Majesty's disposal whilst they can be given honourably and conscientiously, and whilst your Majesty is pleased to deem them worthy of your acceptance. But Viscount Melbourne earnestly entreats that no personal consideration for him may prevent your Majesty from taking any measures or seeking any other advice which your Majesty may think more likely to conduce to your Majesty's service and the advantage of the country.

Whatever may be your Majesty's views, Viscount Melbourne humbly conceives that they will be forwarded and assisted by a full and unreserved personal communication upon the present state of public affairs, and for that purpose Viscount Melbourne will have the

honour of waiting upon your Majesty at Brighton to-morrow.[1]

The King to Lord Melbourne. Brighton, November 12, 1834.

THE King has this moment received Viscount Melbourne's letter, and has determined to send his messenger back with an immediate reply, not only for the purpose of confirming his intention of coming here to-morrow, but also because he is unwilling to delay assuring Viscount Melbourne how highly he estimates the honourable feeling and the principle of devotion to the service of his sovereign and the country which influence his conduct at this critical juncture, as they have indeed directed it on every occasion, and more particularly when he accepted the high office which he now holds, and undertook the discharge of arduous and responsible duties which his Majesty felt he could not entrust to anyone better deserving of his confidence.

That confidence is not only undiminished, but has been increased by his Majesty's experience of Viscount Melbourne's character and abilities, and he would do great injustice to his sense of them if he were not to declare that every motive arising from it, and from personal regard and gratitude, would cause his Majesty sincerely to regret the loss of Viscount Melbourne's valuable services. His Majesty, however, is quite sensible of all the difficulties which have arisen from Earl Spencer's removal to the House of Lords, and he is not blind to those which may be anticipated in any attempt to make such fresh arrangements as shall enable his

[1] A portion of this letter was published by Sir T. Martin in his *Life of Lord Lyndhurst*. The whole correspondence seems certainly to show that much of the criticism that has been passed on William IV. for his dismissal of the Ministry is based on a misconception of the circumstances of the case.

Majesty's present servants to continue to conduct the affairs of the country. He is quite aware that the Government, in its present form, was mainly founded upon the personal weight and influence possessed by Earl Spencer in the House of Commons; he cannot help feeling, also, that the Government exists by the support of that branch only of the legislature, and, therefore, that the loss of Viscount Althorp's services in that House must be viewed with reference also to that contingency.

This and other circumstances producing embarrassment, to which the King will not further allude at present, render the whole question one of the most serious import, and one in which friendly and disinterested advice becomes most important; and his Majesty will therefore most readily avail himself of Viscount Melbourne's proposal that he should have with him a full and unreserved communication upon the present state of public affairs, and will receive him at any time at which he may present himself here to-morrow.

The substance of the audience was given for the first time in the Memoirs of Baron Stockmar, from a memorandum drawn up by the King.[1] William IV. confined himself to expressing alarm at the enquiry into the Irish Church; and as to the new leader of the House of Commons, he thought that Lord John Russell would 'make a wretched figure,' and that Spring Rice or Abercromby were worse than Russell. Early next morning Lord Melbourne received the following letter:—

The King to Lord Melbourne. Pavilion, Brighton, November 14, 1834.

THE King, after the *very confidential* conversation with Viscount Melbourne on the state of the country in consequence of the removal of Viscount Althorp to the House of Peers, and his therefore becoming Earl Spencer, thinks it right

[1] *Stockmar*, vol. i. p. 329.

to inform Lord Melbourne that he conceives that the general weight and consideration of the present Government is so much diminished in the House of Commons, and in the country at large, as to render it impossible that they should continue to conduct the public affairs in the Commons, and particularly when it is considered that the King's confidential servants cannot derive any support from the House of Lords which can balance the want of success in the Commons.

His Majesty, therefore, under *this* view, and the apprehension of contingencies which the King has expressed to Lord Melbourne *verbally*, does not think it would be acting *fairly* or honourably by his lordship to call upon the Viscount for the continuance of his service in a position of which the tenure appears to the King to be so precarious.

His Majesty need, however, hardly repeat that assurance so often conveyed to Lord Melbourne of the high sense the King entertains of his lordship's valuable character and services.

A conversation followed, at which Lord Melbourne good-naturedly consented to be the bearer of a summons to the Duke of Wellington.

Sir Herbert Taylor to Lord Melbourne. Brighton, November 14, 1834.

I HAVE the honour to send your lordship a letter from the King, and also the Chancellor's letter of the 8th inst. and the copy of my answer, which I mentioned to you, and which I shall be obliged to you to return with those of previous date.

Your lordship will forgive my assuring you that I am convinced, from what the King said to me after you were gone, that he had been unable to express how strongly he feels the whole of your proceedings, and

how deeply impressed he is with the conviction that in every feature of it and in every stage of the course you have pursued you have been influenced by no other than the purest and most high principled desire of assisting him in these arduous and critical times, and of promoting to the utmost of your power the interests and welfare of the State.

You will also, I hope, excuse my repeating the sincere expression of my gratitude for the kindness which I have experienced, and for the confidence which you have shown on many occasions, which has, I assure you, been most gratifying to my feelings, and will not cease to be so.

Pavilion, Brighton, November 14, 1834.

AFTER the very *painful* conversation for *both* parties this morning, and so *honourably* disinterested in Viscount Melbourne, the King cannot permit the day to pass without assuring his lordship that his Majesty will *never* forget those words that fell from the Viscount's mouth during the audience his lordship had with the King previous to Lord Melbourne's taking his leave on his return to London.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Grey. Confidential. Pavilion, Brighton, November 14, 1834. Half-past one, A.M.

I LOSE no time in acquainting you that I have just left the King, and, after two very long and unreserved conversations upon the state of the administration, of parties, and of the country, he has come to the decision that his present Ministers are so weak in the House of Commons that he deems it inexpedient to direct me to take measures for a new arrangement, but has determined upon sending for the Duke of Wellington. What will be the consequences God only knows; at the same time I am not surprised at his decision, nor do I know

that I can entirely condemn it. You know the motives which have led him to form it as well as I do. His great distrust of the majority of the members of the present Cabinet; his particular dislike to John Russell, whom I proposed as leader of the House of Commons, having previously ascertained, as well as I could, that he would be the person who could undertake it with the greatest chance of success; the recent conduct of the Chancellor, and the absolute disgust and alienation which it has created in the King's mind; his lively apprehension of the measures which he expected to be proposed to him with respect to the Church; and some imprudence on the part of Duncannon, who had opened to him prematurely the measures which he proposed to found upon the report of the Commission of Enquiry in Ireland[1]—these considerations, reinforced by the opinion that the Church and Conservative party is of great and growing strength in the country, have led him to this conclusion, and it is impossible to say, and I apprehend that you will not be inclined to pronounce, that all these feelings are unreasonable and unfounded. It is almost superfluous to state to you that towards me personally the King's conduct has been most fair, honourable, and kind; and I owe it to him to say that, whether his decision be right or wrong, I feel confident that he has come to it conscientiously upon his own conviction, that it is the best, and unbiassed by any other advice or influence whatever. The contrary will be said, and attacks will be levelled against the Queen and others, but I do believe that there is not the slightest ground for them.

All now depends upon which party is the strongest

[1] Lord Duncannon greatly alarmed the King by suggesting the propriety of suspending the *non-cure* parishes—that is, parishes without any cure of souls (*Stockmar*, i. 331).

in the country—the peers, the clergy, the gentry, the Irish Protestants on the one side; or the Radicals and Roman Catholics upon the other. Much depends also upon the conduct of the more moderate reformers, a class smallest in number, but in such times as these of considerable influence.

I have no time to write more. I shall be glad to hear from you. It is unnecessary to request you to be cautious respecting the contents of this letter, but I must say that I have not, and shall not, express myself with the same entire unreserve to any other person.

It is quite unnecessary to re-tell the story of Lord Brougham's unjustifiable communication to the *Times*, with the gratuitous and malicious addition, 'The Queen has done it all.' After the appearance of the announcement, the Ministry could only resign with so much good grace as they could command.

Downing Street, November 15, 1834. VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and returns your Majesty his most humble, warm, and most grateful thanks for the truly gracious letter he has this morning had the honour of receiving from your Majesty. Viscount Melbourne upon his part can never forget either your Majesty's words or manner upon the late occasion, and your Majesty may rely upon it that any service of which Lord Melbourne is capable will be rendered, not merely as a matter of duty, but with all the warmth of the most grateful feelings and the strongest personal attachment and devotion.

Downing Street, November 15, 1834. VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and begs to acquaint your Majesty that he this morning submitted to his colleagues the written communication which your Majesty placed in Viscount Melbourne's hands yesterday at

Brighton. Viscount Melbourne is directed by them to express to your Majesty their grateful sense of the uniform kindness and condescension which they have met whilst they have had the honour of serving your Majesty, and to express their willingness to discharge the duties of their respective offices until their successors are appointed.[1]

Lord Melbourne to Lord Grey. Private and confidential. South Street, November 18, 1834.

I HAVE this morning received your letter of the 16th. It has given me great satisfaction, because it entirely coincides with my own opinions, and because it confirms me in the consciousness that I took the right line in the two audiences which I had of the King at Brighton. I told him that I was ready to attempt to carry on the Government with the materials which were at my disposal, but at the same time I laid before him the difficulties which were to be encountered, and also the difficulties and dangers of a change. I also told him that I had no doubt, as I have not, that, notwithstanding the loss of Althorp, the Government would still retain the confidence and support of the House of Commons. He made his election, I believe, conscientiously and uninfluenced by others, and I cannot positively venture to pronounce that he was wrong. At the same time it is a fearful expedient; and if the Duke of Wellington should either fail in forming a Government or be speedily overthrown, those who may then be called upon to act will be placed in circumstances of embarrassment which I cannot contemplate without serious alarm.

I entirely agree with you as to the line which it will be our duty then, as it is now, steadily to pursue; but

[1] They were, however, dismissed before their successors were appointed.

the difficulty of pursuing it, the difficulty of supporting the institutions of the country and of resisting violent change and daring innovation, will be much increased by that which has now taken place.

The same to the same. Confidential. South Street, November 19, 1834.

. . . EVERYTHING appears to me likely to pass off quietly, as I am sure I wish it to do. The efforts made to raise a flame in London seem to me quite contemptible, and to proceed from the lowest quarters. The great difficulty, as it appears to me, that the new Government will have to contend with, will be that of bringing forward such measures of reformation as, I believe, they must bring forward without alienating many of their supporters, and without exposing themselves to such obloquy and ridicule for inconsistency as it is almost impossible for them to stand against.

Early in December Lord Melbourne, having refused an earldom and the Garter, went to Melbourne House, and at Derby made two speeches in explanation of his position. The following letter from Lord Duncannon is quoted because Greville attributes to the reproaches of the Home Secretary the change of tone which he discovers in Lord Melbourne's second speech. But the letter, though rather oddly worded, is not at all recriminatory; and a careful examination of Lord Melbourne's second speech does not disclose that 'eating of his words,' those 'amplifications, modifications, and explanations' which, according to the Clerk of the Council, 'exhibited him in a very discreditable and lamentable point of view.' On the contrary, it is a very honourable and moderate speech, and Greville must obviously have been misinformed.[1]

To Lord Melbourne. December 18, 1834.

THE great question of whether the King acted wisely and prudently towards his people remains to be seen. My own opinion is that he

[1] For the speech, which is not otherwise remarkable, see *Torrens*, ii. 58-63.

did not. Neither of the parties that have divided this country are strong enough by themselves to form a government, and the only chance, as I have thought, of preventing such concession to popular feeling as almost amounts to revolution was to be found in the confidence that I knew that the House of Commons was prepared to give you; and I feel assured that they would have supported you in resisting triennial Parliaments, ballot, extension of suffrage, and some other matters of no real moment, but much thought of by the King, in consideration of the good measures you were about to propose in the form of tithe, Church, corporations, and Dissenters. But how now stands the case? The party that were willing to accede to Althorp's wish, and would have acceded to yours, is irritated, and in that state plunges into promises that I am aware must embarrass a new government. The taunts of the Tories, their own safety at a dissolution, the certainty that the Government cannot last, tend to make a junction of all persons opposed to Tory rule.

A new House of Commons assembled, and, as I believe, the new Government within the shortest space of time turned out, the King will perhaps try all expedients—but be assured he will fail.

A few of our nervous friends may shrink from us, in the expectation of preventing measures which their desertion would only precipitate. A thorough change must come, and the measures which have led the King to adopt the course he lately took will be adopted, either by yourself, moderately, but still more effectively than we had proposed, or by others in a manner that would carry with it the overthrow of Protestantism in Ireland, and consequently strike a hard blow at the Church here. Unless a great alteration takes place in public feeling,

and party feeling, and kingly feeling, Brougham will not be Chancellor. In consideration of the wisdom and policy of the King you must bear this in mind, and recollect that the course taken by the King has given an importance to Durham he never had before, and has imparted an almost sovereign sway to O'Connell. Has the King then considered the state of things inevitable at the meeting of Parliament? I care not for a few desertions; in the present temper and feeling of the country a Tory Government cannot last.

The Tories, then, a strong party, are just out; Brougham is denounced by the King, and not upheld by his own friends; Durham in England, and O'Connell in Ireland are forced forward prominently. The Whigs alone cannot form a Government that would stand a week.

Such is the state of things—for it is useless to shut one's eyes to the fact—that has been brought about by the extraordinary course taken by his Majesty.

A case might arise to justify the King to the country by the violence of the measures that were to be proposed to him. Such, he will never venture to tell you, was his real opinion of the Church Bill. I, perhaps, should never have spoken to him or written upon the subject, but to the principle of the Bill I proposed, not once but often, he agreed. But suppose the Tory Government produced a succession of Church and Corporation reforms. The case, it appears to me, will only be worse. Once proposed, stronger measures will be forced upon them, which they must either submit to with a total loss of character and consistency, or be beat; and in either case their fall is certain.

You or Althorp are the only persons to whom the

King or country will look. You should, therefore, knowing his present fixed determination, turn the state of things in your mind, and consider what is to be done under the circumstances to which the King's rash determination has reduced the country.

CHAPTER VIII

IN OPPOSITION

DECEMBER 1834—APRIL 1835

BEFORE Christmas Lord Melbourne was back in the neighbourhood of London, and in the following month was in active correspondence with his late colleagues, and especially with Lord Grey, on the tactics of the Opposition. He appears to have been afraid of Radical violence, but at the same time unable to see his way to a coalition with the Stanleyites, whereby a middle party would have been formed, excluding Toryism on the one hand and Radicalism on the other.

From Lord Holland to Lord Melbourne. Private. January 22, 1835.

I AGREE with nearly all your letter, and very much more than I could wish with the general tending and result; and yet I think necessity, honour, and even reason, apart from passion, must make you try to do what you can to turn out a Tory Ministry, and to reinstate one in character, composition, and *spirit* like that over which Grey and you presided. I think you, and I include him in the observation, are bound to encourage and assist in such an undertaking, and I disapprove strongly of Althorp holding himself so much absolved from labouring in the vineyard.

John, as you say, is and must be leader, and he has many of the best qualifications of one; but yet there are certain requisites, more especially necessary in opposition, in which he is lamentably deficient, and which

must be supplied by some other devices if you really intend to keep a large body of men, and especially the young ones, together. He takes no pains, nor, if he did, has the knack, to collect the opinions of others or to enlist their vanity, their ambition, their interests, and their affections in giving effect to them. Alderman Combe[1] said opposition wanted a focus, and I in a saucy joke pretended that he thought that word Latin for Fox; but what the man meant to say was correct. The various rays of light and heat that beat against a government must be concentrated to raise any warmth, or at least any flame that is capable of destroying so close compacted an edifice as a Ministry must be; and, if Johnny is not active or communicative enough to inspire such a feeling, some meeting or consultation must be organised and constructed of a nature to inspire him and give authority to all he says and does in concert with them. He comes to town to-morrow, and a letter to him in Queen Street will reach him.

As to men, I entirely concur in what you say and determine about D. and B.,[2] and as far as concert and agreement and negotiation go about O'Connell too. But if on a change of government he were willing to accept the Rolls, the Bench, or anything of that sort, I own I should think the Minister who neglected such an opportunity of spiking so vast an instrument of mischief and annoyance both culpable and foolish. I am afraid you are too much in the right in supposing a junction with Stanley impracticable, and in conjecturing that his conduct and speeches in the interim would make it unpopular. But yet I think it ought to be tried, or at least all things or words that

[1] Alderman Combe was an energetic Liberal.

[2] Obviously Durham and Brougham.

tend to render it impossible should be carefully avoided and discouraged; and I do not at all agree with you that the apprehension, however plausible, of subsequent disagreement and reviving jealousies or dislike should be admitted as an ingredient in your motives for not accomplishing it. For no reconciliation of parties who have once separated can be made to which such objections would not apply, and you must be aware, as your Derby speech admitted and urged, of the necessity of union if you intend to avert the necessity of submission and surrender.

As to your principles, there seems to me no difficulty whatever in an adherence to your first—the maintenance, vindication, or commendation of the last Ministry. None, I conceive, will exact confession of error in the past or of amendment in the future. Nor do I think that you would be urged to support in opposition what you opposed in Ministry, in any way at least that would forfeit your character in the country or lower yourself in your own esteem.

It does not seem that many have pledged themselves to Ballot, and it was notorious that Althorp was friendly to the principle of it while in Ministry. You could not, therefore, prevail upon the whole mass of your party to oppose it, much less to renounce it on principle as utterly and for ever inadmissible; but you and others would have full authority enough with them to prevent their pledging themselves to it as a party measure, and after you had resisted it, you would remain as much the head of the whole party as before. It would not, therefore, be considered an insurmountable obstacle to forming a Ministry composed of men who differed about it unless you chose.

Pensions certainly have their difficulty. I quite

agree that we—that is, the late Ministry and persons in office—must out of office vote as we did in, and indeed I should go further, and do all I could to engage our friends to do so also; but it is clear that we could hardly have secured a majority again on that subject if we had remained in office, and in opposition we have no chance of prevailing on the bulk of our party to follow us. The measure, therefore, must take its chance. If the Tories are beat upon it, the thing will be over before you are called upon to form a Ministry. If the Tories resist it successfully, you must attempt to do so too when you are Ministers; and if you are called upon to form a Ministry before the matter is brought on again, you must endeavour to devise betimes some method of dealing with it which will reconcile your friends and the public, and yet not expose you to the reproach of inconsistency or imposture. I do not think you are in a situation in which you are at all called upon to *court* popularity. It is quite sufficient to avoid the reality, the appearance, or the boast of defying it.

Your course and tone of measures seem to me easy enough. Your difficulties of men are much greater, and also all your means of collecting what your party really wish, and of making them act in concert and cordiality for the attainment of it, are very defective, and must be supplied by meetings and intercourse, especially of *young men* in the Commons.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Grey. Confidential. Panshanger, January 23, 1835.

I HAVE not written to you lately upon public affairs, although, as you must suppose, naturally most anxious to learn your opinion upon them, because it appeared to me that no ultimate opinion could be formed by any one until we had an opportunity of seeing the result of the elections,

and of ascertaining a little what would be the real character and complexion of the new House of Commons. I think we may now conjecture it with something of certainty.[1] The supporters of the Ministry will be more numerous than was expected, and their common danger and common interest will make them a firm and united party. From all I can learn, and from the event of some of the popular elections, there certainly is a change in the political sentiments of some part of the community; and a very slight change, joined to the influence of the Government, is sufficient to give a preponderance to a party so naturally strong as is the Tory party in this country. Still I am confidently assured that they will be in a minority; [not] a large one, but a decided minority. What will be the temper and disposition of the majority, as there are many new men amongst them, and as general denominations of Whig, Radical, Conservative, and so forth are very uncertain tests of the real practical character of men, it is most difficult to form any estimate. But supposing, as will most probably be the case, that this majority will be very inveterate against the Ministry and eager for action, it becomes matter of very serious consideration what course it is prudent, and indeed justifiable, to pursue. Are we, or am I, justified in declaring a decided opposition to the present Government, unless we see a reasonable prospect of being able to form another in case we are successful; and what are our prospects in this respect? When I had once embarked with the late Government, I deemed it my duty to the King, to the country, and more particularly to that part of the country which had supported us, to attempt to keep

[1] The elections gave the Opposition a majority, variously calculated at from five-and-twenty to forty votes.

that Government together under every difficulty, and to adhere even to its remains, after it had been deprived of its strength and of those very members to whom personally I was most attached, and that notwithstanding the embarrassments with which we were surrounded, and the many evils and inconveniencies which had existed from the beginning in the very bosom and constitution of the party. This was my object from the beginning to the end, and I acted with all the power I could for its fulfilment. But this is now at an end. This is a new point of departure. I consider myself now free, entirely free, to choose both the principles upon which, and the men with whom, I will consent to engage either in government or in opposition. Now the difficulties with respect to the government of the country, with respect to further measures, seem to me to be little or nothing. The course seems plain and easy in every direction. In an empire like ours there will always be many questions pending, there will always be peril and apprehensions in some quarter or another; but there appears to me at present to exist as little of this nature as can be reasonably expected. Not so the difficulties with respect to men. They appear to me to be irreparable and irreconcilable. I will have nothing more to do with Brougham. I need not state to you the reasons of this determination. They reduce themselves readily under two heads—viz. his whole character, and his whole conduct. I will have nothing to do with Durham. For obvious reasons I forbear to state to you my reasons for this decision; nor need I account for my third peremptory exclusion, which is O'Connell. Now, with all these exclusions, with all the resentment which they would create, and with the formidable elements of party which they would leave not

reduced to order and at liberty to unite and coalesce, is it possible for Lansdowne or me, or would it be possible even for you to form a Ministry with which it would be justifiable to undertake the government of the country? I have omitted to mention minor difficulties, which, however, would be found sufficiently embarrassing—such as Wellesley and Littleton, whom undoubtedly it was the most daring temerity, and only to be palliated by the very equivocal position in which both Brougham and Althorp had placed themselves, to leave in Ireland at the end of the last session, and who lost no time in proving by the most absurd and reckless conduct that they had learned nothing by experience;[1] and Ellice and P. Thomson, who from the beginning of the last Government conducted themselves with respect to the press in a manner which, as I have a friendship for both, I will abstain from characterising. But be assured that, if ever a negotiation were to be opened with Stanley, &c., personal feelings with respect to the latter named individuals and others would be found a great obstacle to its success.

I would now for a moment consider the question in a more enlarged point of view, and with reference to the actual state of feeling in the country as evidenced by the recent elections. The increase of Tories, though perhaps principally owing to the natural influence of the Government and of the King's name, shows to a certain degree a change of opinion in the country. The elections have been for the most part very hardly contested, and very nearly run, which shows a very even

[1] It is impossible to reconcile this statement with Lord Melbourne's letter to Lord Wellesley, written towards the end of August (Pearce's *Life*, iii. 408), in which it is said that there is no man alive more capable of solving the Irish problem than Lord Wellesley. In fact, Lord Melbourne treated him harshly, though he was always a difficult man.

balance of parties. The majority of the House of Commons is miscellaneous, and includes many persons who have pledged themselves to measures against which I am decided. The House of Commons itself is the greatest power in the State; but it is an unstable power, its very existence being precarious. The House of Lords and the Crown as long as the constitution lasts are fixed and settled authorities. Now, is it not a serious question for a man to decide whether he shall, at the head of a majority of the House of Commons, engage in a political warfare with the Crown, with the decided majority of the House of Peers, with almost the whole of the clergy, and I do not overstate when I add, with three parts at least of the gentlemen of the country? Whither will such a contest lead us? Will it not necessarily conduct to the adoption of desperate measures, of which for one I am determined not to incur the responsibility. You will consider this letter not as deciding anything, except as far as it relates to individuals, and only intended to propose these questions for consideration, in order that I may learn your sentiments and receive your advice. It is written without reserve and in the utmost confidence; and you will, I am sure, feel the importance of the conjuncture, and the necessity of taking no step without well considering its consequences.

Lord Grey to Lord Melbourne. Howick, February 1, 1835.

I HAVE been prevented, by an absence from hence on a visit, from returning an earlier answer to your letter of the 23rd of last month. There was nothing, however, that made an immediate reply of material consequence. The questions which you propose for my consideration are very difficult. Upon the circumstances on which they are founded, as

they result from the present state of public opinion, of measures, and of men, I generally agree with you. The result of the elections seems to me to prove undeniably that the feeling of the country is decidedly in favour of the principle of Reform; in other words, of the principles on which we acted. The necessity under which Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues have found themselves compelled, to a certain degree at least, to profess an acquiescence in these principles, would be a decisive proof of this were there no other. Here, then, I think we have a satisfactory ground for deciding, in the first place (I say *we*, for I still continue to consider myself as one of you, though no longer an active associate), that our conduct out of Government should be the same as it was in office—to work out the necessary reforms which the state of our institutions may require, upon safe and moderate principles, in accordance with the constitution of our mixed government and with the spirit of the age.

On the measures which would be required for this purpose I think with you that there would be little difficulty, except, perhaps, with respect to the Irish Church. I doubt very much as to the way in which any proposition upon this question, if it comes to be made a subject of party contest, may be taken by the public; and I should be sorry to see an occasion given for a direct breach with Stanley, to whom I think you must look as a necessary card in the formation of a new administration. I should, therefore, strongly advise against a premature discussion of this very embarrassing matter; there would be great advantage in waiting for the measures which the Ministers must propose upon it, and for this, I think, you have sufficient ground in the appointment of the Commission, whose

report ought to be received before any decision is taken.

Then comes the last and greatest difficulty, with respect to men. I do not wonder at your positive exclusions, nor am I much disposed to dissent from them, except that positive exclusions, with a view to future events of which one cannot beforehand calculate the exigencies, are never prudent, and seldom possible to be adhered to. The chief embarrassment seems to me to be this. You cannot abstain from taking an active part in the discussions which the late events must produce. To you and to Lord Spencer a powerful party, who have real claims upon you, and whom it would be a public misfortune to see disunited and dissolved, will naturally look for assistance and advice. In concerting the measures to be taken, how can you reject, from merely personal reasons which it is difficult to assign, the co-operation of a person like Brougham, who was intimately connected with you in office, and who professes the same principles, and who, whatever may be the justice of the censure which he has so generally incurred, will, immediately after the meeting of Parliament, by his extraordinary activity and talents again attract the attention, and not improbably conciliate the favour, of a great part of the public. His case is quite different from that of O'Connell and Lambton. They are both to be considered as Radicals, with whom I must regard our difference as no less decided, and ought to be as strongly marked, as with the Tories. Here, then, there is a difference of principle at once justifying a refusal to co-operate. But Brougham has lately, at least (how long he, however, may continue I will not pretend to say—in opposition, probably not long), professed moderate opinions in consonance with ours. Acknowledging, therefore, the

objections which you state to 'his whole character and whole conduct,' it seems to me very difficult to keep clear of him, and that it is hardly possible to go on either with him or without him.

What, then, is to be done? Leaving this difficulty in a great degree to time for its solution, and avoiding as far as possible both an open quarrel and too intimate a connection with him, I should say that the best way would be for you to consult with Lansdowne, Spencer, John Russell, and such others of your late colleagues as inspire you with the greatest confidence, upon the course proper to be taken at the commencement of the session, and, having defined it, to trust to the support which it may receive from those who concur with you in principle and opinion. With respect to the particular measures which should be taken for this purpose, I am too far removed from the scene of active politics, and have too little communication with others, to give a decided or satisfactory opinion. But my plan, if I were still to take a lead, would be to bring forward no direct question, unless something in the Address to which I could not assent forced me to an amendment, till the views of Ministers were fully developed. I, therefore, entirely disapprove of opposing the choice of Sutton as Speaker, or of bringing on any direct question, on which I have little doubt that there would be a majority for the Ministers, which would help them very much for the remainder of the session. Your want of confidence in them, your vindication of the late Government, your views for the future, might all be gone into in a discussion on the Address. This would leave everything open, would pledge nobody against you, and would—which I think of the greatest importance—avoid the risk of driving Stanley to support the Ministers on a par-

ticular question, which might facilitate or prepare agreement with them, and cut off in the same degree all hope of co-operation with you. In this way I think you would have a good game. The Ministers are pledged to some measures of Reform. If they are such as to satisfy public expectation, a division amongst themselves, or at least among some of their supporters, is, I think, inevitable, and they are too weak to bear any defection. If they fall short of what is reasonably demanded, their immediate defeat in the House of Commons is equally certain. And then there might arise the possibility of a junction which might enable you to form an administration standing equally clear of the extremes of both parties.

As to the other persons—Wellesley, Littleton, Ellice, and P. Thomson, they are of much less consequence, and I do not foresee much difficulty. I don't know to what you allude in mentioning the conduct of the two last with respect to the press. All this is very unsatisfactory, but I am not able to render it clearer or shorter. I shall not move till quite the end of this month or the beginning of next.

Lord John Russell to Lord Melbourne. Queen Street, February 9, 1835.

I AM very glad to find that Lord Grey recommends, with respect to Brougham, so cautious and conciliatory a course. His merits are great and conspicuous; his demerits vexatious but not vital. My opinion respecting an administrative office may be wrong; but at all events it would be premature to pretend to settle it now. I am quite satisfied that you should act on Lord Grey's advice for the present.

What Lord Grey says of other matters *is, I think,* said in ignorance of the temper of the Commons, of the

country, nay, of the Tories likewise; for, depend upon it, they will agree well enough in their little schemes of Reform, and if any of them are defeated they will only rejoice and say, We[1] are impracticable. I hope you will be in town soon to stay. Many members are arriving every day. I send you letters from Rice and Abercromby which are worth your attention. Althorp is of opinion that we cannot avoid an amendment, and that it is likewise the best policy to have one. This is my view; but I think the more cautiously worded the better. I have sent mine to Lansdowne, who will infuse a few more drops of wisdom into it. Some few crotchety people about the Speaker—Bainbridge of Taunton, Ferguson of Raith, and one or two more Scotch. The division will be very close.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Grey. Private. Panshanger, February 6, 1835.

I JUST write you one line to thank you for your letter. I am infinitely obliged to you for it. I concur in almost every word of it, and if the course which you recommend be profitable and practicable it ought to be pursued, and then my situation will be comparatively plain and easy; but you have not considered the other alternative, which presents the real difficulty. I think it very probable that when members come to London we may find that a majority of the House of Commons are not prepared to come to a decisive vote against the present administration, and in that case the fear of division and defeat will have its effect upon the more eager and violent; but if the contrary should be the case, and the decided majority are ready for and desirous of such a vote, you know enough of parties to be aware that nothing will restrain them from coming to it, and then

[1] That is, the Opposition.

in what a state of embarrassment shall [we] be placed. Then will arise the state of a scanty, disorderly composed majority of the House of Commons being opposed to all the permanent and stable powers, which I enumerated in my former letter. The question of the Speaker, to which you allude, affords some data upon the subject. I am of opinion that, upon principle, it is right to oppose his re-election.[1] I think the Speaker of the House of Commons should not take a part in political changes, and particularly not in a change which there was every reason to believe was disagreeable to the majority of the House, of which he is the servant, and which involved its dissolution. It might, however, as you say, have been more prudent to have acquiesced; but I was informed upon all sides that this was a resolution which it was impossible to adopt, and that the only course which was left open was to select the best candidate, which by general consent, as far as it could be collected, was pronounced to be Abercromby.[2] Much will depend upon this decision. If it should be unsuccessful, it will check the eager and induce prudence and moderation; but if it be successful, it will not be easy to hold them in after it. I am, however, well aware that no rules can be laid down beforehand for our guidance in future circumstances, but we must act accordingly as they exist at the time. About Brougham I entirely agree with you, and shall follow your advice. It has given me great annoyance to see it stated in the newspapers

[1] Mr. Manners Sutton had played a prominent part in the Duke's attempt to form a Government in the crisis of the Reform Bill, and had been in continual communication with the Duke during the late change of administration.

[2] Mr. Abercromby was supported by the more extreme Liberals, Mr. Spring Rice by the Whigs, and Lord Melbourne found their claims most difficult to adjust.

that Abercromby had been preferred to Rice at the suggestion of O'Connell. I can only say that the very contrary has been represented to me, and that it was distinctly stated that O'Connell made no objection, and would vote for anyone who was proposed from our side of the House. As to the communications which may take place between some of our friends and O'Connell, you are aware that it is impossible for me to approve of them, but you must not suspect me of countenancing or even of being conscious of them.[1] I agree also with you about the Irish Church. It is in itself a difficult question, at least practically, and it appears to me very doubtful how it may be taken in this country. I think, therefore, we should be cautious upon it; but it is the opinion of many, and amongst the rest of Howick, expressed in a letter to John Russell, that it should be made the subject of our amendment to the Address.

Lord Grey to Lord Melbourne. Howick, February 3, 1835.

I HAVE never had any communication with Taylor, or with anybody at all connected with the Court, since you left office, but I have heard —though in a rather circuitous way, yet from one to whom I am inclined to give credit—that the Ministers are prepared, at the meeting of Parliament, to make a full statement of all the circumstances which induced the King to change the administration, and for this purpose to produce all the correspondence that passed, and a minute of the last conversations between you and the King, in his Majesty's handwriting, and sanctioned by your signature.[2] This may or may not be true, but I

[1] These communications ultimately had issue in the Lichfield House compact (March 12 and 23); but with those negotiations Lord Melbourne, whether rightly or wrongly, would have nothing whatever to do, and strongly objected to them.

[2] It is, perhaps, of some significance that the King should have written

do not think it improbable, as there is a precedent for it in 1807,[1] when Cabinet minutes were very freely, and in some instances not very fairly, produced. At all events it is well that you should be prepared; and I have therefore thought it right—though, if true, you probably will have heard it from others—to send you the information which I have received.

In reflecting upon the letter which I wrote the other day, but of which I have kept no copy, I am fearful that in what I said of Lambton and O'Connell I may have appeared to put them too much together. This was by no means my intention; I consider their opinions, and I should hope their objects, to be very different. O'Connell is to be resisted as a man who means nothing but mischief for his own personal object. Lambton has formed bad connections, and has put forward opinions which would make it impossible for me to join with him in a Government, were such a thing for me still possible, as I should find it to be necessary to insist upon the Government's pledging itself to oppose the three additional articles of faith.[2] It is possible that he may hereafter see the folly of them, or at least the inexpediency of pressing them. But for the present they seem to form an insurmountable obstacle to a union with persons who think as you and I do upon them.

Perhaps I ought to add that as to one of the articles—viz. shortening the duration of Parliament—though I should be very unwilling to open the question anew, I do not think a proposition for limiting Parliaments to

to Sir Robert Peel on January 14 a long memorandum, dealing not only with the late crisis, but also with his 'general proceedings' since his accession. It is to be found in Stockmar's *Memoirs*, chap. xiv.

[1] When the 'Talents' administration was overthrown.

[2] Apparently the Ballot, triennial Parliaments, and a further instalment of Reform.

five years, as a compromise for carrying an enactment to remove the necessity of vacating seats upon appointments to office, one to be refused without consideration.

How the devil does John Russell make out the question of the Speakership to be one of principle? Is Sutton a whit more of a party man than he was when we supported him? Had he not then (in 1832) taken an active part in the attempt to form a new administration as he has now done? and is he one whit more of a party man than Abercromby?

John Russell says you have agreed to send out letters for an attendance to oppose Sutton, but that you will not persevere if you find the case desperate. Nobody can be more strongly of opinion than I am that the attempt is most inexpedient, but, having once committed yourselves to it, I more than doubt whether the matter would be mended by your giving it up without trial.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Grey. Confidential. Panshanger, February 7, 1835.

I HAVE received this morning yours of the 2nd (? 3rd) instant. I wrote to you yesterday in reply to your last. Many thanks for your information. I have heard something of the same nature from other quarters. They cannot, in fairness or in prudence, produce such a minute, unless its accuracy has first been admitted by both parties to the conversation; and no such document has yet been submitted to me for my sanction. If it were, I own I should have great difficulty, upon constitutional grounds, in affixing my signature to it, even if I were satisfied that it was correct. The advice actually given to the sovereign, the measures which were proposed to him in such a case, the public may have a right to know, and the Ministers, for their own justification, may be permitted to divulge; but the arguments by which that advice was

supported, and still more the various observations upon men, measures, and opinions which were naturally made in such a conversation, the public have not a right to know, nor is it for the convenience of the public service that they should be published. The Tory party, intending to make government impossible under the House of Hanover, clogged the Act of Settlement with this restriction amongst others—that all business should be transacted in the Privy Council, and that every Privy Councillor should sign the advice which he gave.[1] This part of the Act was repealed in the 4th of Anne, precisely, I apprehend, upon the ground that I have stated—viz. that it would entirely preclude and prevent free discussion between the monarch and his advisers. Such a mode of proceeding would at once break in upon the constitutional doctrine of the irresponsibility of the Crown, and perhaps make it a question of veracity and good faith between him and me. The case of 1807 was one of this character. I remember it well. The question was whether the King had given his consent to the introduction of the Bill or not; and I recollect your words in the House of Commons, when you stated that you had understood him to give a cold assent, a reluctant assent, but still an assent. This, however, was a statement of the actual practical result of your audience with him, and not a detailed account of all which passed during that audience. There are here no Cabinet minutes to produce. . . .[2] This is all that I should think myself at liberty to declare, being the actual advice given and decision taken in those conferences; and it appears to me that it would be unprecedented, inconvenient, and

[1] It was rather an attempt to prevent the institution of the Cabinet as distinct from the Privy Council.

[2] Lord Melbourne here recapitulates the circumstances attendant on his resignation.

dangerous to go into a detail of the arguments which were employed, and the remarks which were made, involving, as they of course must, the interests of the country, the policy of measures, the character of men. I have no objection to do so if I am forced into it, but I shall take the line of protesting against it. I am sensible of the importance of the matter, and should be glad to have your opinion upon it.

Lord Holland to Lord Melbourne. February 9, 1835.

JOHN showed me Grey's letter to you. His comments on your difficulties are most just, but I do not think he suggests any very distinct solution of them, especially of the most urgent, Brougham. Wellesley thinks, and I believe with some reason, that Brougham is more likely just now to take his first impression of things, and to square his course accordingly, from what he hears from him (Wellesley) than from any of us, and he is therefore very considerately anxious to make such statements and convey such advice as you and John Russell would most approve.

I referred him to both of you, and John then referred him to you; but if it is of any importance that he should have his cue, no time should be lost in giving it him, for Brougham will be here to-morrow, and Wellesley will see him the next day. He told me that he should inculcate, both as a personal friend and as a politician, the necessity of a little quiescence; but he will not, I think, consistently with his own opinion and feelings, administer on public matters quite so much anodyne as Grey's prescription in his letter to you contains. In truth, I suspect the patient's stomach will hardly bear such sedatives—and by the patient I mean the mass of our friends and Wellesley, as well as Brougham and others; all of whom would be more aptly designated

by the title of 'the impatient,' for they will all be with difficulty restrained from pressing forward measures of Church reform in Ireland and England, instead of waiting for the measures of their adversaries, which must be either unsatisfactory in themselves or discreditable to Ministers, and in either case expose them to the censure of the public and a loss of influence that must be fatal to their existence as a Government.

The Irish, and even the English, Radicals are just now 'aspiring to be led' by those they formerly reviled, and I do believe they will regulate, not only their paces but the direction of their movements, to such views as you would hold out to them, even if a junction with Stanley were not a very distant one; but one command neither they nor many who would disclaim the name of Radicals as decidedly as Grey himself will ever obey, and that is 'halt,' or 'take your stand here.' I am sadly afraid that many among them, and among us too, would be too apt to confound the true Fabian policy of prudent inaction for a time, the *cunctando restituere rem*, with the permanent occupation of a post in which they are determined not to remain; and I include Wellesley among that class because he has, with great emphasis, above once assured me that it is his conviction that, if the present Ministers can stand three weeks after the meeting of Parliament, their power is secured and a system of misgovernment established, and he even added with some warmth, 'Are you determined to demolish these men, or are you not? If yes, I act cordially and strenuously with you; if no, I tell you fairly I will not.' This, if you will, is declamation, and *his way*; but if it may be only language with him, it is not a very unusual or unnatural feeling with those who have been straining every nerve to give you a majority in Parliament, and

who are impatient for battle, victory, and triumph. In considering these matters Fabius himself must take into calculation the extent of his authority over his troops, and if he has detached wings ready to serve him in one course of operations but not in another, he must compare, not only the abstract merits of the two systems, but the comparative advantages of inferior tactics with a larger force over more perfect tactics with inadequate means.

All Grey says on prospective exclusions is right. He should apply his principle even more extensively than he does, and consider all exceptions as temporary and accidental, O'Connell and all.

The same to the same. February 11, 1835.

I DO not quite comprehend what the *plunge* is which you would take on certain contingencies, but dread taking now. It seems to me that none expects you to do more than 'demolish these men,' as Wellesley calls it; and they once demolished, you are as much at liberty as before 'to determine with what principles and with what associates you will embark,' always admitting, as you needs must, that your associates in the work of demolition are at equal liberty to chuse their boat when that work is completed. You will, however, be more likely to have a choice of companions, and better able to judge of their qualifications then than now; and if I saw the practicability, I hardly should see the great use, of too definite and premature arrangement of your crew and your course. In one very embarrassing instance there is, no doubt, reason to wish it practicable, but in your very letter you acknowledge that it is not so, and express a hope that it may be dispensed with. I see no use in Johnny showing Grey's letter to Wellesley; there are

expressions in it about Durham he would not like to be repeated, which might, in truth, be misunderstood. Wellesley is not at all for the Fabian system, and he would infer, perhaps, lukewarmness, and disunion, and what not from the suggestion.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Grey. Brocket Hall, February 11, 1835.

I SENT a copy of your letter of the 1st inst. to John Russell, requesting him to show it only to Holland. I am afraid that the course which it recommends, and which I entirely approve, is not likely to be very popular with our friends and supporters. Holland calls it the Fabian system, admits its prudence, but urges that it will not suit the impatience of those who are irritated at seeing their friends turned out, and who have been making great exertions to secure a majority in the House of Commons. Wellesley in particular, he states, has repeatedly said to him, with great emphasis, 'Are you determined to demolish these men, or are you not? If yes, I act cordially and strenuously with you; if no, I tell you fairly I will not.' Many others, no doubt, are of the same opinion. Spencer is all for an amendment, and John, in fact, leans to the same opinion, although he does not state it so broadly. All will therefore depend upon the number of those who may be for moderate measures. If they are considerable, which I never yet saw them, they may possibly somewhat restrain the more violent; if they are very few and insignificant, they will only irritate and drive them further. To add to the whole turmoil and confusion, Brougham, I take it, arrived yesterday or to-day. I shall go to London on the 15th, which will be quite early enough to enter into such a scene of trouble. There is only one point upon which I have always intended and always omitted

to ask your opinion, and that opinion is, I apprehend, to be collected from the general import of your former letter. Do you think there is much to be made in the way of attack on the conduct of the Duke of Wellington in taking personally the whole government upon himself in November last?[1] It is evident that, according to the present course and practice of our government, the offices which he held—such as First Commissioner of the Treasury and Home Secretary of State—are incompatible with each other. But is there much in this objection, seeing that he took them *ad interim*, and carefully abstained during that period from adopting any measure of the least importance or doing anything more than the most usual and ordinary business? I am aware it may be said that the precedent is dangerous, and may be pushed further another time, &c. &c.; but can more than this be said? I recollect from your former letter that you do not think that it forms a substantive charge; but I should wish to know how far and to what extent you are of opinion, upon reflection, that it affords matter for serious consideration.

Lord John Russell to Lord Melbourne. Confidential. Queen Street, February 11 [1835].

Of course the question of the amendment cannot be decided till after the 19th. I sent my draft to Lord Lansdowne, who approves. I send you his letter. Should he see Lord Grey's? I suppose it would be enough that you should inform him of the general contents.

The Irish Church question ought not, I think, as a separate question, to form part of any amendment, unless the Tories provoke it.[2] But Lord Grey's letter

[1] Pending the arrival of Sir Robert Peel, the Duke acted as First Lord of the Treasury, Home Secretary, and two other Secretaries of State.

[2] It was more or less 'provoked' by Peel's Tithe Bill, to which the appropriation clause was added by the Liberals.

raises an ulterior question. He evidently looks to the formation of a Liberal government again disunited on this question, and agreeing to postpone it. If such a government can be made I should be ready, if Lord Grey or you sanctioned it by taking the chief post, to give it what support I could. But I would take no share in it. Nor would I give any advice to my friends to take or decline office under it.

Abercromby's prospects are very good. I believe we shall have above three hundred in the House, and this for an opposition is something new. Pray do not be later than the 15th. I will dine with you, if you like, on the 16th.

P.S.—There is a question of having a meeting on the 18th, to which Whigs, Radicals, and Repealers should be invited. I feel doubtful about it, for although it would concern only the Speaker, a marked union or disunion between the parties might be expected to follow. What say you?

Lord Grey to Lord Melbourne. Howick, February 14, 1835.

You seem to have anticipated my opinion upon the manner in which the Duke of W. *accroached* the whole power of the government. Nothing could be more unconstitutional, or more dangerous as a precedent. It could be justified only upon the ground of necessity, arising out of some imminent public danger. Nothing of this sort can be pretended. At least I never heard that, up to the moment of their dismissal, the King had intimated any want of confidence in his late Ministers, or could pretend that any attempt had been made to force any measure upon him which it might have been his duty to resist as threatening danger to the settled government of the country.

There seems, therefore, to have been no such public

injury as would justify a departure from the established usage of leaving the government to be carried on by the existing Ministers till their successors could be appointed. The precedent, even with the plea of necessity, would have required some guard to prevent its being used on all justifiable occasions, and without it is certainly deserving the severest censure.

It appears to me, therefore, that it is a matter not to be passed over without some animadversion. But I do not think it is one which it would be expedient to make the subject of a direct motion, unless, upon the discussion which may arise, there should appear to be a strong and general feeling upon it.

It is very well for Wellesley and others to talk of *demolishing* the present Government. But there are two questions to be asked. *Can* they *demolish*? and, if they can, *can* they rebuild? There is a third, which I would put to Wellesley. What assistance can be or will be given to the attempt to demolish?

As to Holland's opinion, it comes just to this—that we are to give up what we think prudent and expedient, because we cannot restrain the *impatience* of those who will listen to nothing but their own conceit or their own feelings of resentment.

Where is this to end, and to what may it not lead you? I have sanguine calculations about the division on the Speakership. But I doubt very much the success, and still more the propriety, of the coercion which it is attempted to exercise upon the members of the House of Commons, and I think more will probably depend upon the debate on this than on most questions. Peel will have a good case, of which he will, with his usual skill, make the most. Burdett's support of Sutton will produce a great effect, and if Stanley takes the

same side I think the Government will certainly be successful.[1] I write in great haste, but was unwilling to lose another post.

Pray let me hear, when you have nothing better to do, how things are going on.

Meanwhile Lord Brougham had returned to town, and demanded an explanation. He got one with a vengeance.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Brougham. Brocket Hall, February 24, 1835.

You must be perfectly aware that your character and conduct have since November last formed the principal and general topic of debate and discussion. I believe myself to have said little or nothing anywhere upon the subject. I have written little or nothing, except to one or two persons, and that in the strictest confidence. At Lord Holland's, where politics are talked every day and all day long, it is of course to be expected that more observations have been made; but if you believe that any hostility or malignity towards you has prevailed there, as far as I have been witness to what has passed, I can assure you that you are misinformed.

It is a very disagreeable task to have to say to a statesman that his character is injured in the public estimation; it is still more unpleasant to have to add that you consider this his own fault; and it is idle to expect to be able to convince almost any man, and more particularly a man of very superior abilities and of unbounded confidence in those abilities, that this is the truth. I must, however, state plainly that your conduct was one of the principal causes of the dismissal of the late Ministry, and that it forms the most popular justification of that step.

[1] The Stanleyites voted with the Government; nevertheless, Mr. Abercromby was elected Speaker by 316 votes to 306.

Entertaining these opinions, I cannot of course either complain of or deprecate any explanation which you may think proper to make, or any course which you may deem it due to yourself to pursue.

The same to the same. South Street, February 17, 1835.

You will not be surprised that I have taken a few hours to consider your letter, which I received yesterday evening, before I replied to it. It is very long, very multifarious, and you yourself state, perhaps with a little exaggeration, that the occasion is quite unexampled. You will recollect that I have not commenced a correspondence of this character, that I have not sought it, that I have shown nothing but reluctance to embark in it. I made no answer to your letter of January 22 last from Bordeaux, a letter full of inculpation, invective, and menace. I showed it to no one, because I thought it better to avoid the offence which its unmeasured expressions must necessarily give. I only mentioned to one or two that I had received a communication from you to that effect. My letter of the 14th inst. was in answer to yours of the preceding day, in which you informed me that you retracted that part of your letter from Bordeaux in which you had stated that 'You should take no public vengeance for what had been done against you.' This communication appeared to me to render it necessary to say, that for myself I could neither complain of nor deprecate any course which you might think proper to take upon the meeting of Parliament; but I must here assure you that I wrote only for myself and from myself, that I consulted no one upon the subject, and that neither our late colleagues nor any other person is concerned or in any way responsible for that letter or for any of the opinions contained in it.

You complain that no previous intimation had been given you that it was thought by any of your former colleagues that your conduct had been, not the cause, as you state it, but one of the causes of the dissolution of the late administration. You can only mean that no formal communication had been made to you to that effect, because the eight first pages of your letter from Bordeaux are entirely occupied with complaints that this charge against you was at that time perpetually made in the press and at Brookes's, that it was admitted and confirmed by the silence of your colleagues upon all public occasions, and that it was particularly accredited by the language of Earl Grey's family, which necessarily involved Earl Grey himself. You were, therefore, well aware both of the existence and the prevalence of this view of your conduct.

But perhaps it might have been better if this explanation, which I am aware must necessarily have taken place before the opening of Parliament, had been entered upon earlier. It was a most disagreeable discussion, and it is natural to defer that which is painful as long as possible. I know its inutility, or rather its evil. I know that remonstrance and crimination are no good, that they only increase irritation and render obstinacy more inflexible. But the question could not have been avoided, and perhaps it is as well that it has been brought on in this manner.

When I wrote that your conduct had been amongst the causes which led to the late change of government, I did not mean particularly to insist upon that fact, or still less to imply that the disinclination of the Court was to deprive a man of the support of his allies and political friends. I only intended to state strongly and shortly my conviction that, during the four years you

had been Chancellor, you had committed errors and imprudences of such magnitude as greatly to impair the vast and almost unparalleled powers which you possess of rendering service to your country. In your letter you go through various statements of services which you have rendered and of sacrifices which you have made. For the disposal of your patronage, it may have been as disinterested and as entirely directed by a regard to the general interests of the administration as you represent it to have been; but it is impossible to decide this satisfactorily without going into the circumstances of each case more minutely than I have either time or wish to do, and therefore I decline giving any opinion upon this subject. For your Parliamentary powers, and their prompt, universal, ready, and most powerful exertion, I at once and for all admit them to the fullest extent. It is superfluous to say more upon this subject, and I only entreat you to reflect with yourself what must be the estimate of the counterbalancing qualities which can induce a man who has anything to do with political life to run the least risk of depriving himself of such assistance and support.[1]

The journey to Scotland gave very great and general offence. You say that you intended only a quiet tour to Dunrobin, and did not expect meetings and addresses. Everybody else, I can assure you, not only expected them, but knew that they would take place, and were greatly apprehensive of the consequences. You assert

[1] It will be remembered that these are almost the words of Lord Melbourne's famous retort in the House of Lords: 'My Lords, your lordships have heard the powerful speech of the noble and learned lord, one of the most powerful ever delivered in this House, and I leave your lordships to consider what *must* be the strength and nature of the objections which prevent any Government from availing themselves of the services of such a man.' (The speech was made in 1838).

that these public exhibitions annoyed you, and that you neither sought for nor wished them. This may possibly be true, I can readily credit it; but will anyone else credit it? You know that what is true does not signify so much as what is believed, and there is hardly any man alive who will give the least credence to such an assertion. But I acknowledge that you are right, I was deficient in my duty, I ought to have remonstrated with you before you left London upon the imprudence which you were about to commit and the injurious results which it might produce.

You are generally for specific charges—*ubi lapsus, quid feci?* Allow me to observe that there may be a course and series of very objectionable conduct, there may be a succession of acts which destroy confidence and add offence to offence, and yet it may be very difficult to point out any great and marked delinquency. I will, however, tell you fairly that, in my opinion, you domineered too much, you interfered too much with other departments, you encroached upon the province of the Prime Minister, you worked, as I believe, with the press in a manner unbecoming the dignity of your station, and you formed political views of your own and pursued them by means which were unfair towards your colleagues. If a proof of this latter accusation were demanded, I should adduce your conduct in those unfortunate transactions which led to the resignation of Lord Grey last summer. Your correspondence with Lord Wellesley was, I doubt not, of the character which you described in the House of Lords. I do not think this was without blame; but the part which was indefensible was, that you directed Littleton to write to Lord Wellesley to recommend that the three first clauses of the Coercion Bill should be given up, and should send

that despatch which in fact overthrew the administration. This proceeding was quite unjustifiable towards Lord Grey, and just as much towards myself, who was then Secretary of State for the Home Department charged with the affairs of Ireland, and who was entirely neglected in the matter. Having engaged with that Ministry, I thought it my duty to the King and to that large portion of the country which had supported us to submit to anything rather than to produce the dissolution of the Ministry, and therefore I submitted in silence even to that proceeding upon your part. That Ministry is now dissolved, not by any act, nor in consequence of any act, of mine. We stand at a new point of departure, and it is now right and expedient that I should determine for myself upon what principles and with whom I will again engage in public affairs. You seem to consider my letter as putting an end to the political connection which has subsisted between us. You will observe, however, that it does not express such a determination; and I beg to repeat and press upon your attention that it is my letter only, and does not express the sentiments of any other individual. If you suppose that my conduct has been influenced by any notion that you are so lowered and weakened as to be powerless, I can assure you that you are much mistaken. Nobody knows and appreciates your natural vigour better than I do. I know also that those who are weak for good are strong for mischief. You are strong for both, and I should both dread and lament to see those gigantic powers, which should be directed to the support of the State, exerted in a contrary and opposite direction.

No one can feel more deep concern for any private difficulties to which you may be exposed than I do, and if you think for a moment that I take them into the

account against you, I am sure you will not long persist in doing me so great an injustice. . . . .

I have written this with great pain. I owe it to myself and to you, to truth and fair dealing, to be explicit. I can only add that, whatever may be your determination, no political differences will make any change in the friendship and affection which I have always felt and still continue to feel for you.

The same to the same. South Street, February 20, 1835.

I HAVE felt so very unwell during the last two days that I have been unable to reply to your last letter. In an affair of a most painful nature it gives me some pleasure to find that you are disposed to take mine of the 17th in good part, and it does not appear to me that it is necessary to continue the correspondence further than to retract one or two expressions which have been improperly used, and to explain one or two facts and opinions which have been very naturally misconceived.

Your statement with respect to the concern which you have had with the press of course I must implicitly believe. I can only lament that a contrary impression should prevail so greatly, as it undoubtedly does, and that opposite assertions should be so positively made.

You do not mention in your letter, but I understand from other quarters that you have taken some, perhaps, just offence at the word 'domineering.' I am ready to admit that it was too strong for the occasion, and express my regret at having used it. The question of interfering in other departments is one so much of time, occasion, manner, degree, that it is useless to continue the discussion of it. I allow that your great powers, and the perpetual claim made upon them to discharge the duties of other departments, naturally gave you a

greater influence in the general conduct of affairs than possibly other Chancellors may have had. But the question which I do not mean to offer further is, whether you did not press this influence somewhat beyond its proper and natural limits. . . .

Few things have given me more concern than this correspondence, and I am anxious to close it. I should do so with something more like satisfaction if I could only hope that it would not leave any bitterness or acrimony behind it.

Soon afterwards the battle began in the House of Commons.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Grey. South Street, February 27, 1835.

You will hear by the post that brings this that the amendment was carried this morning by a majority of seven.[1] It is understood that the Ministry will not resign upon it, and this determination gives us a day or two's breathing-time, but more cannot be counted upon. Nobody can point out, even to his own satisfaction, what is to be done; but it appears to me that the difficulty begins to be personally felt, and it is to be hoped, therefore, that a disposition may prevail to concur in such measures as are best calculated to meet it, and which, of course, might be devised if there prevailed anything like a spirit of concession, moderation, and true patriotism. I do not deny that the measures about which we are contending, or rather about which we are not contending, are of great importance, but they are not of sufficient importance to justify the hazarding anything like a public convulsion for them. Howick made a most excellent and judicious speech. I have seen no one this morning, so I speak only from my own impression upon reading the report,

[1] An amendment to the Address, regretting that the progress of reforms had been interrupted by the dissolution of Parliament. It was a Pyrrhic victory.

but I confidently expect to find all the world concurring with me in the opinion. Adieu.

During the following weeks Lord Melbourne was probably too busy to write much, and his papers contain no mention of the Appropriation resolution, upon which the Government was overthrown. The long struggle came to an end when Peel resigned on April 8.

CHAPTER IX

HOME AFFAIRS

1835–1837

On the day after the resignation of Sir Robert Peel Lord Grey was summoned by the King to give advice on the state of affairs. He recommended Lord Melbourne and Lord Lansdowne, who were desired to attend the next day. They found the King once more hankering after a coalition, but at once refused to be parties to such an arrangement. On the 11th Lord Melbourne was summoned alone, and desired to undertake the formation of a government. His first difficulties were with his old colleagues.[1] Mr. Spring Rice refused to be member of a Cabinet which included any members of the Radical party; Lord Grey declined the Foreign Office, though it was pressed upon him by Lords Melbourne, Lansdowne, Holland, and Palmerston, and Mr. Spring Rice.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Grey. South Street, April 12, 1835. Two A.M.

The enclosed letter, addressed to you, was agreed upon yesterday morning at Lord Lansdowne's. Before I sent it to you I sent a copy to the King, through Sir Herbert Taylor, and I now enclose his Majesty's reply, which I find here upon my return.[2] I have only to add that it will give me great satisfaction if these communications should

[1] By far the best account of the formation of Lord Melbourne's second Ministry is to be found in the interesting extracts from Lord Broughton's (Sir J. Hobhouse's) *Recollections of a Long Life*, published in the *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 133.

[2] The King's reply is given by Mr. Torrens (ii. 103). It expresses his wish to see the Earl at the head of the Government.

lead to any arrangement which will secure the benefit of your services to the public, and that to the completion of such arrangement I should be most anxious to give any assistance in my power.

Lansdowne House, April 11, 1835.

HAVING well considered the state of parties and the circumstances of the country, we are decidedly of opinion that no administration which will command public confidence or give any promise of stability can be formed without uniting every element of strength which the present state of parties and opinions admits of combining, and most of all we think it desirable that you should be induced to give your active support and assistance in office. We submit to you this as our deliberate judgment, and earnestly entreat you to give it your most serious consideration. It would naturally be our wish that you should place yourself at the head of the Treasury, but if you should for any reason be desirous of declining that situation, we trust that you will not refuse to fill the post of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, which will ensure to the public the benefit of your abilities and experience, and to your colleagues the protection and encouragement of your countenance and authority. Lord John Russell has not been informed of our intention to make this communication, but we feel no doubt of his entire concurrence in it. We have not thought it expedient to incur any delay by inviting the agreement of others, but we are confident that it would be cordially and universally given.

MELBOURNE.	PALMERSTON.
LANSDOWNE.	SPRING RICE.
VASSALL HOLLAND.	

Lord Grey's reply is unfortunately not forthcoming.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Grey. South Street, April 12, 1835.

I HAVE just received your letter. Being convinced that the course pointed out in the letter agreed upon at Lansdowne House is the only one which affords a chance of a solution, in any respect satisfactory, of the present political difficulties, I necessarily learn the determination to which you have come with great sorrow and concern; at the same time I learn it without surprise. I feel the force of the reasons upon which it is founded, and your having acted upon them cannot, in my opinion, justly expose you to the slightest censure or animadversion. I shall without delay transmit your letter to his Majesty, who will derive satisfaction at least from that part of it which conveys the assurance that you will be ready, out of office, to assist by your advice and by your best efforts the formation of a new government.

The same to the same. South Street, April 14, 1835.

I HAVE just seen Palmerston, and have had a full and plain conversation with him, the result of which is that, unless he is to be replaced in the Foreign Office, he had rather not engage in the administration at all. This he states distinctly, unequivocally, unalterably. The question, then, is between leaving him out altogether and giving him the foreign department. I am not insensible to the inconveniences of the latter alternative, but his being totally omitted from the arrangement would be in the eyes of the public a strong condemnation both of him and of the policy which he had pursued, and would be taken as no slight indication that the latter was intended to be changed. Let me know your opinion.

The same to the same.

I HAD a conversation of three hours with Brougham last night. He was at times vehe-

South Street, April 14, 1835.

ment, but not more so than was to be expected from a person of his character in his situation. The general result is that his feelings would be much soothed if the seals were put into Commission, whilst they would be greatly exasperated if a new Chancellor, and particularly if Campbell, were appointed.[1]

The two letters which I have received from the Master of the Rolls,[2] and which I enclose, seem to smooth the principal difficulties which lie in the way of a Commission, and I know from certain authority that Lyndhurst is entirely of the same opinion. These reasons appear to me so preponderating in favour of a Commission that I entertain no doubt that it is the best course to be adopted.

Return me the Master of the Rolls' letters.

Meanwhile the King had started a number of objections, which were only removed by the exercise of great firmness and tact on the part of Lord Melbourne.

Lord Melbourne to the King. South Street, April 13, 1835.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and at the outset of the arduous task which it has pleased your Majesty graciously to confide to his hands, submits respectfully the following observations, which appear not only important but absolutely necessary to be made.

Upon looking back to the whole intercourse which

[1] According to Lord Campbell (*Chancellors*, vol. iii. 467), Brougham was persuaded to regard his exclusion from office as being due to the royal resentment. But it is difficult to reconcile this statement with Lord Melbourne's very outspoken letters in the previous chapter. Nor does Greville's account of the interview convey the impression that Lord Melbourne resorted to subterfuges. The Commissioners were Pepys, Vice-Chancellor Shadwell, and Bosanquet.

[2] Pepys. Lord Lyndhurst, however, when consulted, declined to give an opinion.

Viscount Melbourne has had the honour of holding with your Majesty, and to the series of affairs in which he has been engaged under your Majesty's direction; Viscount Melbourne greatly congratulates himself that there has never existed on either side the slightest misconception or misapprehension, nor has there ever arisen any question which tended to create any doubtful or uneasy feeling, or to afford any ground of subsequent complaint; and Viscount Melbourne believes this happy result to have arisen from the clear and distinct manner with which the views and expectations entertained on each side have been laid down at the commencement of transactions, and to the scrupulous fidelity with which those engagements so laid down have been invariably adhered to and observed.

Viscount Melbourne is naturally still more desirous of pursuing the same course upon the present momentous occasion, and he therefore feels it necessary, before he proceeds further in the task of constructing a Ministry, and particularly before he induces others actually to undertake to engage in his Majesty's service, that some points of vital importance should be precisely understood.

Viscount Melbourne would subject himself to great and just reproach if, after the arrangements had proceeded to some length, there should be found to arise serious, perhaps insuperable, difficulties, which might easily have been foreseen and ought to have been prevented.

At all times and in all circumstances it is necessary for the conduct of public affairs under our constitution that the Ministry should possess, and be known and felt to possess, the full confidence of the Crown, the advantage of all the influence which it can command,

and the due exercise of all the powers with which it is invested. This assistance is absolutely indispensable in the present times, when the authority of the Crown and the existence of the Government are to be maintained against powerful assailants and violent opposition. Viscount Melbourne therefore trusts that, if he should be enabled to present to your Majesty such a distribution and arrangement of a Ministry as may meet with your Majesty's approbation, that your Majesty will not withhold from Viscount Melbourne those marks and proofs of your Majesty's favour, confidence, and support, without which there will be little hope or chance of conducting your Majesty's government either with honour or advantage.

Amongst these marks of confidence, Viscount Melbourne places the appointment of the officers of your Majesty's household, with respect to whom Viscount Melbourne trusts that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to listen to his recommendation, in the same manner and to the same extent as your Majesty did to that of Earl Grey, and also of Viscount Melbourne during the short time that he had the honour of serving your Majesty as First Commissioner of the Treasury.

With respect to your Majesty's household, Viscount Melbourne would be anxious not to interfere with its present constitution, provided those who compose it, and who have seats in either House of Parliament, are prepared to give your Majesty's servants a firm, unequivocal support; but Viscount Melbourne trusts that, upon the occasions of future vacancies, those members of either Lords or Commons will not be selected whose principles and opinions are adverse to your Majesty's Government.

Viscount Melbourne also thinks it his duty not to

conceal from your Majesty that, in case a Ministry should be formed, it will be absolutely necessary, both for the fulfilment of former intentions as well as for the purpose of obtaining present support and producing upon the public mind a favourable impression of the good understanding which subsists between the sovereign and his servants, that the accession of the Ministry to office should be accompanied and united by the creation of a certain number of peers.

Your Majesty will not for one moment suspect that it is Viscount Melbourne's intention that the creation should be so numerous as to wear the appearance of an intention to overawe and control the decisions of the Upper House of Parliament; but, considering that not less than six new peers have been created during the late administration, it appears, on this account as well as upon the general grounds above stated, to be reasonable that the intention entertained by Lord Grey should be fulfilled, and also that some gentlemen well qualified by property and by character should be selected by those who will then be your Majesty's confidential advisers and elevated to the peerage; and that it should be generally understood and proved that your Majesty will not object to such an exercise of this branch of your royal prerogative as your Majesty's servants may, within the bounds of discretion and constitutional principles, feel it proper to advise.

These are the specific points which Viscount Melbourne humbly ventures to present to your Majesty's attention, and in so doing he ventures to repeat that it is only for the purpose of avoiding any future misunderstanding, and with the anxious desire to promote your Majesty's true interests, and to secure the stability of your Majesty's Government.

The same to the same. South Street, April 15, 1835.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and returns to your Majesty his thanks for the gracious, and in many respects satisfactory, communication which he has this morning had the honour of receiving.

Amongst many grave and weighty matters your Majesty has introduced, one subject—namely, the question of the Protestant Established Church in Ireland—is of such vital importance that Viscount Melbourne feels that it is absolutely necessary in the first instance to come to a precise explanation and to a distinct understanding upon it.

Viscount Melbourne is well aware of the deep solicitude with which your Majesty has always viewed this matter, and perfectly recollects that in the audience with which he was honoured on November 15 last at Brighton this question was distinctly stated to be a chief ground of your Majesty's objection to the arrangement which Viscount Melbourne then suggested, and the rejection of which produced the dissolution of his administration. Viscount Melbourne, however, begs to ask your Majesty's serious attention to the new situation in which both your Majesty and those who are called upon to advise are placed by what has recently been done upon this subject.

The House of Commons has passed two resolutions, the one declaring [1]

and the other that no measure for the settlement of the tithe can be satisfactory unless it embodies in it the principle of the foregoing resolution.

[1] The terms of the resolution are omitted in the draft. They were to the effect that the surplus revenues of the Irish Church should be devoted to the general education of all classes of the people—the Appropriation clause.

Upon the adoption of this second resolution by the House of Commons, your Majesty's servants resigned their offices into your Majesty's hands, and your Majesty, in order to form a new administration, called upon those who have proposed, supported, and carried both the above-mentioned resolutions. It must be manifest that those who have borne such a part in these proceedings cannot, with any regard to their own consistency, or with the least hope of effectually serving your Majesty, undertake to carry on your Majesty's government unless it is understood that they are to act without delay upon the principle of the resolution; that they are to carry that principle into practical effect, and that in so doing they are to receive the sanction, approbation, and support of your Majesty.

Viscount Melbourne is abundantly satisfied with your Majesty's gracious declaration 'that, if he should be enabled to present such a distribution and arrangement of such a Ministry as shall meet with your Majesty's approbation, he will receive from your Majesty those marks and proofs of your Majesty's favour, confidence, and support which are indispensable to conducting the government with honour and advantage.' But with reference to the statement and the observations upon individuals with which this assurance is introduced, Viscount Melbourne must distinctly declare that, whilst he trusts he is incapable of recommending to your Majesty any individuals whose character and conduct appear to him to disqualify them from holding any situation of trust and responsibility, he can neither admit nor acquiesce in any general or particular exclusions, and that he must reserve to himself the power of recommending for employment any one of your

Majesty's subjects who is qualified by law to serve your Majesty.[1]

With respect to your Majesty's household, Viscount Melbourne will ask no more than your Majesty has been graciously pleased to accord. With her Majesty's household, Viscount Melbourne would regret as deeply as your Majesty that any interference should be rendered necessary, and Viscount Melbourne mentioned the subject principally with the view of preventing the recurrence of painful transactions to which your Majesty has adverted, and which Viscount Melbourne earnestly hopes may not take place again.[2] Viscount Melbourne is much rejoiced to find that your Majesty approves of his having brought the question of the creation of peerages under your Majesty's consideration. Viscount Melbourne, in his former observations, guarded himself against the imputation, which he now again disclaims, of intending to introduce into the House of Lords such a number of members as may have the appearance of the intention to sway and govern the decisions of that assembly. Neither is Viscount Melbourne desirous of pressing upon your Majesty any individual whom it may be repugnant to your feelings to advance to that honour. For each of the peerages which have been conferred during the late administration there may have been sound special reasons, but the general result is the addition of six votes to those who are opposed to your Majesty's present advisers, and who are the predominant party in the House of Lords. If Viscount Melbourne undertakes to conduct your Majesty's government, he

[1] The obnoxious individuals were Joseph Hume, O'Connell, and, apparently, Sheil (see letter of October 1, 1836).

[2] The dismissal of Lord Howe, for voting against Lord Grey's government.

also undertakes it in very particular and unusual circumstances—circumstances which will render it necessary that he should receive some decided mark of your Majesty's confidence and of your determination to support him, and he trusts, therefore, that your Majesty will not be unwilling to confer seven or eight peerages upon his recommendation, provided the names which are presented to your Majesty for that honour shall be such as your Majesty shall, upon their consideration, approve.

The same to the same. South Street, April 15, 1835.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and loses no time in acknowledging your Majesty's second letter, which Viscount Melbourne received a little after nine this evening.

Viscount Melbourne had already finished, in obedience to your Majesty's commands, his reply to your Majesty's communication of this morning, and he has now the honour to transmit it to your Majesty; but the importance of your Majesty's last letter, and the consequences to which it may lead, reduce many of the other topics to comparative insignificance, and Viscount Melbourne is much rejoiced to find that your Majesty now takes the same view as Viscount Melbourne of the situation in which your Majesty and those who are called upon to advise you are placed by the recent votes in Parliament and by the proceedings which have taken place in consequence of them. Your Majesty has resorted for counsel to those by whose efforts these resolutions were placed upon the journals of the House of Commons, and if your Majesty appoints them your Ministers your Majesty must take them pledged and bound to act upon those their recorded principles.

It is true your Majesty's previous consent will be

necessary upon the introduction of the Bill, inasmuch as its provisions will affect some of the benefices which are in the gift of the Crown; and it is also true that your Majesty's solemn assent will be required to give the Bill the force of law, after it has passed through the two Houses of Parliament. It must be a preliminary to the acceptance of office by any of those who have supported or advised the resolutions that your Majesty should feel yourself prepared to do both these acts, and also to give to the measure in its progress your full and cordial support, and Viscount Melbourne learns with great sorrow that your Majesty entertains any doubt or scruple upon the subject.

Viscount Melbourne submits that, as it would be a novel course, so it would be highly inexpedient to submit the question which your Majesty states to fifteen judges for their opinion, inasmuch as it is a question, not of law but of conscience, and upon which the opinion of judges is worth no more than that of other men.

The matter is of great importance and great urgency. The scruples, if persisted in, must be fatal to any of the projected arrangements. The House of Commons re-assembles to-morrow, and anxiety will probably prevail to learn whether any progress has been made in the formation of a Ministry, more particularly if any rumour should arise of the existence of difficulty or impediment. If any personal explanation should be desired, Viscount Melbourne will be ready to wait upon your Majesty at any hour that your Majesty may think proper to appoint.

On the 18th the arrangements were completed.[1]

[1] Lord Melbourne's second Cabinet contained:—
First Lord of the Treasury, Viscount Melbourne.
Lord President of the Council, Marquess of Lansdowne.

It cannot be said that Lord Melbourne undertook the conduct of affairs under particularly encouraging circumstances. The majority in the House of Commons was small and fluctuating; in the Upper House the Government were in a minority of something like a hundred, and, with the exception of Lord Lansdowne, the Prime Minister's colleagues gave him little assistance, while against him were Brougham and Lyndhurst, the Duke and Bishop Phillpotts. The hostility of the Court to the Ministry as a whole was openly pronounced, and was directed with especial severity against individuals. Lord Palmerston wrote in October 1835 that the King of the Belgians had told him that William IV. liked Lord Minto and himself, 'but as to the others—John Russell and Hobhouse, for instance—he did not pay them compliments.' At the same time it is only just to point out that the King's opposition to the Ministerial programme was perfectly constitutional and entirely above-board.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Mulgrave. South Street, May 28, 1835.

I HAVE this morning received your letter of 25th inst., which I have read with much satisfaction, not only because I cordially approve of the opinions and feelings which it expresses, but because it rather proves to me that the tone which I have taken in the House of Lords upon

Lord Privy Seal, Viscount Duncannon.
First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Auckland.
Foreign Secretary, Viscount Palmerston
Home Secretary, Lord John Russell.
Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg (Mr. C. Grant).
President of the Board of Control, Sir J. Hobhouse.
President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Poulett Thomson.
Secretary for War, Viscount Howick.
Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Spring Rice.

Lord Mulgrave was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; Lord Morpeth, Chief Secretary; Lord Plunket, Lord Chancellor of Ireland; Sir John Campbell and Sir R. Rolfe, Attorney- and Solicitor-General of England. The Ministry was composed for the most part out of old materials—'Damn the Whigs! they're all cousins,' Lord Melbourne is said to have exclaimed on this or some other occasion—but several young men of ability were employed in subordinate posts, Mr. Labouchere, Lord Morpeth, and Sir George Grey for instance.

the question of your entry into Dublin, which some here have thought too low, was upon the whole the most prudent.[1] I might have said that nothing had been done that was illegal, and that was not natural and even laudable; but this would have given great offence, and would have encouraged similar displays hereafter in Ireland, which I certainly do not think desirable.

With respect to Mr. Tierney, I only mentioned his name, and he is already solicitor on one of the circuits; and when I mention any name, pray remember that I never mean to press for any preference which is not perfectly just and expedient. I am anxious for O'Gorman on account of his connection with my brother, and I am much obliged to you for what you have done for him. I was also anxious for Curran, because I know and have a high opinion of him.[2] After these I have no strong personal feelings that I know of.

We had yesterday Perrin's[3] opinion upon military assistance in case of tithe before the Cabinet. It is a very difficult one. You will receive a letter from J. Russell upon it, in which we all concur. Perrin's opinion is very loose, and, as you will find all Irish opinions, a great mixture of law and of general political reasoning. If a subject is about to enforce a legal claim and apprehends a breach of the peace, or in the act of enforcing it is interrupted by violence, it does not

[1] The banners borne at the Viceregal entry bore devices in favour of Repeal and the extinction of tithes, and gave great offence to the Protestants of Ireland. The King also took umbrage at the green yeomanry uniform worn by Lord Mulgrave on the occasion.

[2] Tierney and Curran were both sons of parents more famous than themselves. Curran wrote *Sketches of the Irish Bar*, and a Life of his father.

[3] The new Attorney-General for Ireland. The appointment gave great satisfaction to O'Connell, who with his supporters thereupon took his seat on the Ministerial side of the House.

appear to me that the government performs its duty if it refuses him effectual protection and assistance. You must lay down and act upon the contrary principle.

The government which advises persons not to enforce their legal claims proclaims its own weakness, and lays itself open to a scornful refusal to attend to its recommendation. The only course open is to discourage applications, to examine carefully the cases in which assistance is demanded, and to guard by all the means in your power against the abuses adverted to by the Attorney-General, and to note the occurrence of them with great severity when they do take place.

There is one matter which strikes me whilst I am writing, and which I therefore suggest. Whenever it is possible I would have the troops accompanied by a stipendiary magistrate, who is impartial and will see the law observed. Lord Wellesley required that a magistrate should always attend; but I am informed that no magistrate can ever be induced to go upon such a service unless he be interested in the collection from connection with the parson or some other reason. Now the object of such a man will be only to get money, and that by any means, without reference either to law or to practice. I know that the paucity of stipendiary magistrates renders it impossible to do this in all cases, but wherever I could do it I would.

The same to the same. Downing Street, July 7, 1835.

CANNOT you manage to speak to the Roman Catholic bishops, and tell them how many enemies the conduct of the priests makes both to us and to them, to their cause and to their religion. When I perceive anybody lukewarm with us or eager against us, if I ask the cause I always get for answer that it is on account of the manner in

which he has been harassed and vexed by the Roman Catholic clergy in his neighbourhood.

Among Lord Melbourne's correspondents at this time was Haydon, the artist.[1]

B. R. Haydon to Lord Melbourne.

I HAVE met with the most glorious success! The last lecture at Newcastle was hailed with cheers and acclamations. I then went to Hull, which ended in the same way, their enthusiasm swelling out into a thunder of applause. At Newcastle a school of design was founded, and I began one at Hull. I am now here, and my reception as usual.

Be assured the people are alive to sound art, and only want instruction. My three first lectures are entirely on the construction of the figure, and yet listened to with an attention that the Greeks could not exceed.

I write you this that you might know what is going on in all the great towns, for I have engagements directly after Christmas again, and wherever I have been once I go twice.

Be careful what you say at the Academy dinner, at that interesting entertainment founded to reflect honour on the Art, but made a tool of to get business for the monopoly.

The people know what is what, as well as the women.

The great legislative Act of the session was that for the Reform of Municipal Corporations, which became law after Lord Lyndhurst had done his worst, thanks, in part, to the moderation of Sir Robert Peel. At the outset the King objected *in toto* to the Bill, wishing to proceed rather by granting new charters than by Act of Parliament, and objecting particularly to the repeal of the old charters and the lowness of the proposed municipal franchise.

[1] In whose Autobiography there are numerous notices of Lord Melbourne.

Lord Melbourne to the King. South Street, June 2, 1835.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and having submitted, as from himself and without employing your Majesty's name, the substance of your Majesty's communications upon the Bill for regulating Municipal Corporations to the Attorney-General, begs leave to transmit to your Majesty the letter of the learned gentleman upon the subject. The reasons urged appear to Viscount Melbourne to be satisfactory and conclusive, but many other arguments of a more general and more pressing nature might be added. Viscount Melbourne will take care that your Majesty's remarks upon the details of the Bill are subjected to close and accurate examination by those who best understand the subject. The result shall, as soon as possible, be forwarded to your Majesty.

Your Majesty will do Viscount Melbourne the honour to recollect that in all the conversations with which your Majesty honoured Viscount Melbourne in July 1834, and in all the correspondence which passed upon that as well as upon subsequent occasions, the necessity of a decisive and effectual measure upon this subject was always declared by Viscount Melbourne to be absolute and unavoidable. Viscount Melbourne, like all other public men, has more than once acquiesced in propositions with respect to which he himself entertained doubts, in compliance with the opinions of others, the circumstances of the times and the general feeling of the public; but with respect to the corporations it has always been his own strong and sincere opinion that a thorough reformation of them was required, if it was intended to prevent abuse and corruption and to restore unanimity and concord in those great communities which have grown up within the bosom of the empire.

The King to Lord Melbourne. Windsor Castle, June 2, 1835.

THE King, conceiving that it may be satisfactory to Viscount Melbourne to receive a written acknowledgment of his letter of this day, enclosing that from the Attorney-General on the subject of the Bill for regulating Municipal Corporations, will not defer returning that letter until he sees him to-morrow.

His Majesty has read it with attention, and admits the Attorney-General to have treated the question most ably, and to have offered many reasons and arguments which are calculated to remove some of the objections which had occurred to his Majesty. It is also, above all, due to Viscount Melbourne to say that the King has always felt so convinced of his firm attachment to the monarchical constitution of this country, and of his disinclination to yield to any attempt which the spirit of the times or the leaning to popular opinions and principles by which others may be influenced may suggest or produce, that the uneasiness which many events and circumstances had raised and were of a character to keep alive was in a great measure removed by the assurances conveyed in Viscount Melbourne's communication, and by the confidence his Majesty reposes in his determination to resist the encroachments which others may be disposed to encourage. These assurances have therefore made a stronger impression upon his Majesty's mind than the arguments used by the Attorney-General. He has indeed misapprehended one of the King's objections, as he seems to have understood it to apply to the election by burgesses being rated householders in lieu of election by 10*l.* householders, whereas his Majesty's objection was stated to be to the extensive and frequent recurrence of popular elections, producing, in his apprehension, as much local excitement as the

election of members to serve in Parliament; and he cannot admit this apprehension to be lessened by the remark of Sir John Campbell, that in a large proportion of places the Parliamentary franchise of 10*l.* householders would not have afforded nearly a sufficient number of electors for municipal purposes. His Majesty, however, most entirely concurs in the opinion held by him that for the election of members of Parliament the 10*l.* franchise is quite low enough, and he sincerely wishes it were higher.

The King was aware that the prerogative of granting municipal charters had been very sparingly or imperfectly exercised since the commencement of the reign of George I.; and he cannot help feeling that the assumption of power by self-elected bodies in corporations, which the Attorney-General describes as an usurpation upon the prerogative of the Crown as well as upon the rights of the people, may be traced to the neglect and carelessness of those whose duty it was to have protected both. But although his Majesty trusts that he shall never render himself liable to the imputation of a disposition to encroach upon the rights of the people, he must feel that his duty equally prescribes to him that course which shall secure the rights of the Crown against popular encroachment; and he may with truth declare that he has never felt any desire to assert or to claim rights other than those which the free constitution of this country confers upon its sovereign.

The Lords rejected the Appropriation clauses of the Irish Tithe Bill, and the measure was in consequence lost. At the outset the following correspondence took place with the King:—

Downing Street, June 16, 1835. VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and humbly submits the heads

of the proposed Bill for settling the Tithe question, and also for carrying into effect the resolution of the House of Commons as approved by your Majesty's confidential servants. Viscount Melbourne also submits the copy of a communication received from Lord Duncannon in October last, and also an autograph letter from the same noble lord, which contains some observations on the subject. Viscount Melbourne is sensible that, according to Lord Duncannon's observations, much explanation may still be required, and your Majesty will readily believe Viscount Melbourne when he states that many difficulties have been found to stand in the way of a satisfactory and reasonable arrangement. Those difficulties arise mainly from the circumstances in which Ireland is placed; from one mode of faith being established by law, and another professed by the large body of the people. Theirs is a state of things neither intended nor contemplated by any of those who since the conquest of Ireland have directed the affairs of that country; a state of things, as far as Viscount Melbourne's knowledge and experience extends, unknown and unprecedented in any period of history or any quarter of the globe—a state of things contrary to reason and to common sense.

It is no answer upon this subject to say that, though the population is Roman Catholic, the property is possessed by Protestants. Religious establishment is eminently for population, not for property. Its existence is for the benefit of the poor and the needy, not of the opulent, who have the means of providing spiritual instruction for themselves, according to their own opinions and modes of faith.

Viscount Melbourne was himself anxious that this question should not be brought forward at the time or

in the manner in which it has been. But your Majesty must feel the extreme difficulty that there was in preventing its introduction into Parliament. When it was brought forward Viscount Melbourne could do no other than act according to his conscientious opinion upon the subject.

Your Majesty is well aware of the resolution adopted by the House of Commons in the earlier part of the session upon the motion of Lord John Russell. Your Majesty's servants are pledged to carry that resolution into effect, and this is the Bill which they advise should be presented to Parliament in order to redeem that pledge. Viscount Melbourne does not know what may be the effect of the new measures which it is proposed to introduce, but Viscount Melbourne feels certain that the present system of Irish cures, of clergymen without flocks, does not and cannot promote the growth of Protestantism in that country. With respect to that part of the measure which relates to the payment of tithe, Viscount Melbourne only remarks that it is founded upon the Bill which was last year rejected by the House of Lords, and also upon the Bill which was introduced in the present session by Sir Henry Hardinge.[1]

Windsor Castle, June 18, 1835.

. . . HIS MAJESTY is quite sensible of the difficulties which have been found to stand in the way of a satisfactory and reasonable arrangement, and he admits the correctness of Viscount Melbourne's reasoning with respect to many points connected with the situation of Ireland, to which these difficulties may be in a great way traced; while he laments that, from the reign of Elizabeth to the present period, the

[1] Sir Henry Hardinge, afterwards Viceroy of India and Viscount Hardinge, had been Irish Secretary in Sir Robert Peel's Ministry.

system of government pursued in Ireland by those who have directed the affairs of that country has not been more uniformly and more successfully applied to the correction of evils and the improvement of the state of things which, although it may not have been originally contemplated, has been in progress under successive rules and administrations.

With respect to the question immediately at issue, it is not the King's wish or intention to engage in any discussion in which his private feelings and opinions might appear to be at variance with the course which his public duty and the circumstances under which he is placed have prescribed to him; and from the same reason his Majesty abstains from entering into any particulars of the proposed Bill, to which his solemn assent will be required to give the force of law after it shall have passed through the two Houses of Parliament.

His Majesty, however, cannot refrain from stating his concurrence with the wish expressed by Viscount Melbourne that the question had not been brought forward at the time or in the manner in which it has been brought forward, and from applying his own feeling to the subject, more particularly to the resolution introduced in the earlier part of the present session, upon the motion of Lord John Russell, before the Report of the Commission had been received, to which reference is made in the second page of the heads of the Bill, and which Report his Majesty has not yet seen, in the gross or in the abstract. But his Majesty is well aware that his present servants are pledged to carry these resolutions into effect, and he has stated in a communication to Viscount Melbourne, dated April 16 last, that, having admitted them to his councils as the advocates of the principle of those resolutions, he is bound to

afford to them his sanction and support in their endeavours to carry them into practical effect.

The Ballot cropped up in this session; and then came the difficulty, caused by certain members being pledged to support a measure which the Government, as a whole, was determined to oppose.

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Poulett Thomson. Downing Street, June 1, 1835.

I HOPE you will be careful of what you say upon the Ballot to-morrow. A little more prejudice against us would go near to unship us. Cannot you put your vote solely upon the present time being inopportune, and the motion improper, without saying anything about the future?

Meantime a deputation from the General Assembly of the Scottish Church had waited upon the Prime Minister and asked for an endowment for the churches recently added to the establishment. Perplexed by the violent outcry of the Central Board of Scottish Dissenters, the Government attempted to shelve the difficulty by appointing a Royal Commission. Whereupon a correspondence arose with Dr. Chalmers.[1]

Lord Melbourne to Dr. Chalmers. Confidential. South Street, August 18, 1835.

I BEG leave to acknowledge your letter of the 14th instant, which I received yesterday.

No instructions have yet been given to the Commissioners of Church Inquiry in Scotland, nor is it at present intended to give any. It is conceived that the Commission itself sufficiently defines the duties which they have to perform.

It is with great concern that I learn the dissatisfaction felt in Scotland at the institution of the Commission, but it is without surprise. I think I told you, when I had the pleasure of seeing you in Downing Street, that I looked with anxiety to the composition of that Com-

[1] Dr. Chalmers's letters, dated August 28, September 8, and September 15, are to be found in Hanna's *Life of Chalmers* (2nd edition), pp. 367-377.

mission, and that I felt that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to form it in such a manner as would command general confidence.

Both parties, from the experience and observation I have had of them, are too heated and eager, too positive in their respective opinions, and too sanguine in their expectations to secure any chance of such a result. The one party looks to nothing less than a general change in the state of human nature and human society by means of increased pastoral exertion; and the other is dreaming upon the pure and prosperous state of the Christian Church in the first centuries, and the evil and degradation which it has incurred ever since the unfortunate conversion of the Emperor Constantine. You will excuse the plainness of my phrase, but to persons so influenced by heat and enthusiasm, to use no stronger terms, it is vain to expect that any arrangement can be satisfactory. ... .

The same to the same. South Street, September 3, 1835.

It gives me great concern to find that you consider the statement reported to have been made by me in the House of Lords to have been unjust to you and the other members of the deputation from the Church of Scotland whom I had the satisfaction of seeing in Downing Street. I cannot recollect the precise terms which I used, and, therefore, I cannot say whether the report is accurate or otherwise; but I know what I intended to express, and I can affirm that nothing was further from that intention than to charge any of the deputations who came to me with any improper violence of language or of feeling, and still less with any manifestation of unchristian bitterness towards each other. What I intended to say was, that I found the one party declaring

it to be a religious duty to extend religious establishments, and to increase emolument; the other maintaining that we were equally bound by all the most sacred considerations, not only to refrain from any such assistance or augmentation, but to take any safe and practicable step for the speediest possible abolition of both. These extreme opinions appeared to me to have so firm, tenacious, and deep-rooted a hold on the mind of each party that, as it was impossible to reconcile them, so it seemed to me to be hopeless that any step could be taken in ecclesiastical affairs which could be satisfactory to both, or indeed to either of them. This explanation may not exonerate me from the charge of error, but I trust that it will be sufficient to relieve me in your mind from the imputation of having made a false or injurious representation of the conduct of the deputations.

I am not capable of entering with you into the discussion of the best means of extending and propagating the influence of Christianity. Suffice it to say, that I do not acquiesce in the conclusions to which you attempt to force me, and that if my premisses do necessarily lead to them—of which I am not convinced—I shall be the first to abandon and surrender them.

I should be wanting in fairness, however, if I did not state, that to stir and agitate the question of an additional grant to the Church of Scotland at this period I consider to have been a great imprudence and indiscretion in those who must have been well acquainted with the state of religious feeling and religious opinion in that country.

The Commissioners will so discharge their duty as to relieve themselves from any such charge, and the ministers of the Church from any alarm and jealousy in that respect.

On the whole the reports, as far as England and Scotland are concerned, were prosperous enough. The following letter is from the Speaker, Mr. Abercromby:—

Confidential. Berwick, October 9, 1835.

We are so far on our way to Scotland, and I had not intended to write to you until I had ascertained the real extent of O'Connell's impression upon my countrymen.[1] A paragraph, with which I shall conclude, will show you why I write *now*. From all I have heard the state of the country is prosperous, and the tone and temper of the people sound and sober. The improvement in the intellectual state of the mechanics of Sheffield quite astonished me the other day when I was there with Labouchere. Their advance in knowledge, reflection, and in the enjoyment of the comforts of life quite surprises me. What would happen if trade failed God knows; but people are always very impatient under the loss of comforts such as they now enjoy. Everywhere I find that the House of Lords is a general topic of discussion. Their present safety consists in the absence of any practicable plan capable of being carried out without a violent struggle. In the event they will fall or undergo a great change, but the fear of violence may protract their existence if they will submit to act in accordance with the opinions of the House of Commons. But independently of the feeling of personal dislike which exists in many of those who are their superiors, and which superiors have not used their knowledge with judgment in the private relations of life, it does appear to be hopeless that any body of men should recover from the state of contempt into which they have fallen. They may try to save

[1] During the autumn O'Connell conducted a singularly ineffective campaign against the House of Lords in the North of England and Scotland.

themselves by abolishing proxies. They will do no good; for in any case the Tory lords would be the majority, and if they act as they have done they would still oppose the House of Commons and the people. The change would, therefore, only have the effect of fixing the opinion that they were incurable without a great change. There is nothing left for them but to submit, and wait events. If they do not follow this course, I incline to think that a struggle of some sort on that question would become inevitable.

The Court of Chancery is a very great difficulty. From all I have heard I am impressed with a conviction that allowing matters to rest as they are will produce a state of things highly injurious to the reputation of your Government. If you were to quit office with that question unsettled, and a great arrear in the Court of Equity, which I fear would be the case, it would tell seriously against you. I am also of opinion that it must be a great disadvantage to any government not to have a lawyer in the Cabinet, and to be obliged to depend on those who do not belong to it. Again, in the disposal of legal patronage, a Chancellor ought to be the safest adviser. . . . How all this is to be adjusted is beyond my skill to suggest, but it is a most pressing and most important and urgent question, in all views, both public and as regards *one* great person. Brougham's position seems to be somewhat changed by O'Connell leading an agitation not in Ireland but in Great Britain. Looking at what he has lately done, I recur to what I was told by one of the intelligent among the popular members, who said that O'Connell, from his influence with the people, would do more than anyone else to renew violent reforms. I doubted this at the time; what has since passed looks as if it was true.

Meanwhile the administration of Irish affairs under the conduct of Lord Mulgrave and Lord Morpeth, and especially of the Under-Secretary, Thomas Drummond, was proving a brilliant success, though its benefits were not much appreciated at the time.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Mulgrave. Most confidential. Panshanger, October 16, 1835.

THE newspapers, as you will see, have made most violent attacks upon the subject of your inviting and receiving O'Connell. Very few persons have mentioned it to me, but from the tone of those who have I cannot doubt of its having made a deep impression, and of its furnishing a popular topic of invective against us. This does not change my opinion of the propriety of the step, but it is worth while to consider what is the real cause of this intensity of feeling upon a matter comparatively so trifling. I cannot doubt that it arises principally, if not entirely, from the low scurrility of his speeches, which offends the friends of those against whom it is directed, and which, more than offending, gives universal disgust and sickness.[1] It produces a general conviction that he is an irreclaimable blackguard, and that it is unfit for any gentleman to associate with him. It hinders one from saying a single word in his defence. I cannot myself perceive how it can be necessary or expected from him to assume this tone; I cannot see that it forwards any object, or that his speeches would be in any degree weakened by the omission of this vile coarseness. I know how difficult and dangerous it is to convey any intimation to him, but could it not be represented to him through any friend how much he, in this manner, degrades himself, and how much by

[1] Also because he would not fight. Lord Alvanley's duel with Morgan O'Connell, who fought in his father's stead, took place shortly after the formation of the Government.

degrading himself he injures those whom he is anxious to support? The noise and clamour about his dining with you arises principally from his having called the Duke of Cumberland a liar, Wicklow a coxcomb, and Westmeath something else, in the morning. Now, popular measures must have the effect of increasing the power of the majority of the people of Ireland, that majority is Roman Catholic, of the Roman Catholic body O'Connell is the leader. In that situation it is his duty not to render himself unnecessarily odious and detestable. If he does he will bring everybody to be of the opinion of the House of Lords, that a measure is to be rejected at once merely because he is for it. I think his great acuteness must perceive how much he stands in the way of his own success. He may have reasons for such conduct, but I cannot conjecture what they possibly can be. I wish to put you in possession of what I am certain is the general feeling upon this subject, and to give you a hint, upon which you will act with the utmost caution and circumspection, at any rate, and upon which you must not act at all if you entertain the least doubt of the prudence of doing so.

Lord Melbourne to the King. October 19, 1835.

. . . VISCOUNT MELBOURNE feels certain that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland entertains no intention of advancing Mr. O'Connell to the dignity of a Privy Councillor.

Viscount Melbourne greatly rejoices that your Majesty has mentioned the circumstance of Mr. O'Connell having been invited to the Viceregal Lodge, upon which so much comment has been made by the public journals opposed to your Majesty's present Government, inasmuch as it affords Viscount Melbourne an opportunity of exonerating the Lord Lieutenant from the burthen of

the blame, if blame be justly due to the course which he has pursued.

Upon the termination of the session of Parliament, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, being at a distance and perceiving the very effectual support which your Majesty's Government had received from Mr. O'Connell in the House of Commons, very naturally wrote a confidential letter to Viscount Melbourne to enquire what was to be the conduct of the Irish government towards that individual upon his arrival in Ireland. To this letter Viscount Melbourne immediately replied that there was to be no approach towards him whatever, no correspondence with him, no communication of a political character. The Lord Lieutenant then desired to be informed what he should do with respect to the ordinary intercourse of life, stating that it had been his rule and practice, since he had been in Ireland, to invite to his table every member of Parliament who passed through Dublin, whatever had been their political opinions, and whatever had been their public conduct. Viscount Melbourne at once and unhesitatingly replied that it was better, in his opinion, not to make Mr. O'Connell an exception from the general rule which had been laid down. Your Majesty will therefore perceive that, whether the step were culpable or not, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland did not take it without a full sense of its importance, without previously consulting Viscount Melbourne upon the subject, and without receiving Viscount Melbourne's sanction and approbation. Your Majesty will also perceive that this is not a marked attention paid to Mr. O'Connell, inasmuch as he receives it in common with all other members of Parliament.

There are few things more inconvenient and embarrassing in public affairs than the inferences which

are drawn, and the impressions which are made, by the manner in which persons in high stations, as that of the Viceroyalty of Ireland, compose their society, either usually or upon greater occasions. There are but three courses which they can pursue. They may confine themselves entirely to the members of their own family, as many sovereigns have done, and as may be considered, upon the whole, by far the most prudent and safe. But this is evidently impracticable for a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. They may invite only those who concur with them in political opinions—which in the present circumstances of Ireland would be highly impolitic; or they may extend their attentions indiscriminately to all persons of eminence and distinction. The latter principle has been adopted, and, in Viscount Melbourne's opinion, wisely adopted, by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; but it must be applied generally and without distinction; and Viscount Melbourne feels confident that your Majesty must feel that, unless Lord Mulgrave intended to sacrifice his own influence with the majority of the people of Ireland, and to injure instead of promoting your Majesty's service, he never could admit to his table the bitterest opponents of your Majesty's Government while he excluded its most powerful supporters.

Viscount Melbourne laments and condemns many of the opinions and much of the language of Mr. O'Connell as much as your Majesty could do. Viscount Melbourne does not wish to bring under your Majesty's notice irritating matters of this description. But Viscount Melbourne often reads and hears of libels upon the House of Commons as well as upon the House of Lords, and Viscount Melbourne could point out other speeches, made by persons of eminence and authority, which appear to him not quite so powerful and effective, but

quite as objectionable and dangerous, as those of Mr. O'Connell.

The King to Lord Melbourne. Windsor Castle, October 20, 1835.

THE King is glad to learn that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has no intention of advancing Mr. O'Connell to the dignity of a Privy Councillor.

In reply to the statement of the course pursued by Lord Mulgrave in his character of his Majesty's Viceroy in Ireland, and Viscount Melbourne's remarks on the subject, the King has to observe that he admits generally the propriety and the good sense of the rules which he lays down, and that he considers that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland more particularly should be governed by the desire to follow those rules without partiality or favour.

But there may be and are exceptions to all rules; and his Majesty cannot help considering Mr. O'Connell an exception on the present occasion, inasmuch as he was taught to do so by the government of which Viscount Melbourne and others of his present colleagues were members, when they advised him to denounce Mr. O'Connell in a speech from the throne as a disturber of the public peace.[1] If they were justified in giving that advice, his Majesty's representative in Ireland cannot be justified in receiving Mr O'Connell at public table; and it may be added that he received that attention almost immediately after his arrival in Dublin from a tour in which he had aspersed and libelled the House of Lords, and pursued his usual course of agitation—a course which, in his Majesty's opinion, fully justifies the advice given to him to which he has before adverted.

The King laments and deprecates violent language

[1] In 1833.

against the branches of the legislature and those in authority, whatever may be the quarter from which it may come; but he appeals to Viscount Melbourne's good sense and candour, whether the Government may not suffer and be committed in a greater degree by libels uttered on the constitution of the country, the monarchy, and the two other branches of legislature by 'its most powerful supporters' than by its bitterest opponents?

On October 13 Lord Melbourne wrote to Archbishop Whately, asking to be informed of the condition of the Protestant clergy in Ireland. The Primate's answer (dated Dublin, October 16, 1835) is remarkable.

The Archbishop begins by congratulating Lord Melbourne on his ecclesiastical appointments, 'bestowed with a view to mere merit, without personal or political grounds.' He then dilates on the state of the Irish Church:—

Your lordship asks how the clergy contrive to exist. In some instances they are left quite destitute, and are relieved by a pittance out of the liberal subscription raised for them in England. In some instances, again, they are pretty well paid; but the greater part of them are, I believe, in an intermediate state—*i.e.* a few of the landlords pay the composition, and the rest not. Thus, in a living to which I am just about to present a man, and which is a specimen of many, the proper income is between 200*l.* and 300*l.*, of which a little more than 80*l.* is paid. . . . If the plan I suggested three years and a half ago had been then, or soon after, adopted—that of throwing together the Church revenues into one fund, to be placed in the hands of an ecclesiastical Board—and if due advantage had been taken of such an arrangement, the troubles and distress of the Church would have been by this time nearly over; and this most of the clergy *now* understand. But

the Primate and some others succeeded in raising such a strong suspicion against me as to prevent timely co-operation. With the sincerest wish for the support of the Establishment, his mistaken views, as I am convinced they are, lead him to take the very step calculated, in my judgment, to accelerate its downfall.

But the eyes of the clergy and their friends are opening more and more to their true interests; they are becoming sensible that the congregational system—the principle of 'the Baring clauses'—must become law if the Church establishment here is to stand; and I expect that a petition in favour of it from the clergy will be got up against the beginning of the session. The measure would go far towards cutting the intricate knot of the 'appropriation.' A difference will indeed exist between those (nearly all the Protestants, lay and clerical, in Ireland, and a very large proportion in England) who deny that the *collective* revenues of all the Irish livings exceed what is needed for the collective wants of the flocks, and those who *will* not, or who *cannot*, consent to leave the revenues undiminished; but the bitterest quarrel was about the *suppression of parishes*, and this ground of dispute would be completely cut off by an arrangement which would do away with *parishes* altogether, and leave the distribution of the collective revenues, according to the wants of the several congregations, in the hands of the members of the Church. The abstraction, then, of a certain portion of these revenues would be simply the *loss of so much money*; it would be—compared with the other mode of 'appropriation'—like losing a few ounces of blood, instead of having a limb mortified and the mortification likely to spread.

But I can make allowance for the difficulties of

Government when opposed, as they must expect, on the very same point by ultra-Tories and agitators; the one madly playing into the hands of the other. *E.g.* Mr. Shaw is reported as having vehemently opposed the Baring clauses; and *I know* that an influential person among the Radicals frankly avowed to a friend of mine his utter aversion to the plan, 'because,' said he, 'it is just the very measure that will *preserve* the Establishment in Ireland, which *I* want to see destroyed.' Would that our friends knew more or our enemies less!

I earnestly hope that Ministers will not involve themselves in difficulties by deferring to the last moment the framing of a Bill (some there must be unavoidably) for the settlement of the Irish Church, and by withholding confidence from those whom there is no reason to distrust.

To the Archbishop's proposal Lord Melbourne appears to have mentioned some objections, to which the Archbishop replied, on October 24:—

. . . On the whole I should say that making the clergy independent in a *pecuniary* view (dependent for a pleasant neighbourhood they must always be) of their congregations (*i.e.* of *all* their parishioners, as they *now* are of most) would be a great benefit in respect of [the better class] of clergymen; and in regard to the worst [those who look chiefly to monetary considerations] would do no evil, since it would only change one kind of fault for another, and not a worse—servile timidity or noxious flattery for insolence or negligence.

But the circumstances I just mentioned [the dependence of many Protestant clergymen on Roman Catholic parishioners] are so decisive as far as Ireland is concerned that I need not dwell further on more general reasons.

As for the other two objections, as it is unnecessary

to prove to your lordship that they are futile, so it is not difficult to meet them in a manner satisfactory to all who may urge them with *sincerity* and are *open to conviction*; the rest may be, perhaps, silenced, though never satisfied.

1. The clergy, from being *stipendiaries* of their *parishioners*—who are mostly hostile to their religion—will become *stipendiaries* of an ecclesiastical Board, consisting of respectable individuals belonging to their communion. If anyone can deliberately prefer the former, he must have been reading of Romulus and Remus suckled by the wolf, till he has come to the conclusion that the wolf is the very best wet-nurse. As for separating the clergy from the land, I have really nothing to say but that it is not fields but human beings upon which *our* culture is bestowed. I remarked before the Lords Commissioners, three and a half years ago, how lamentable it was that, under the tithe system, as buildings increase and cover what were cornfields, the revenues of the clergyman are regularly diminishing, exactly in the ratio that the services required of him increase.

2. The principle of conferring a benefit on each *spot*, in consideration of the revenue drawn from the inhabitants of that spot, leads to such a long tissue of absurdities, and some of them so palpable, that I think those of the widest swallow would choke at some of them.

Lord Melbourne to Dr. Burgess (Bishop of Salisbury). Downing Street, November 9, 1835.

I HAVE the honour of acknowledging your lordship's letter of yesterday, together with the publication which accompanies it.[1] I return your lordship my sincere thanks, and shall pay the most serious attention to the observations which

[1] A copy of a printed letter on Lord Melbourne's speech on the Irish Tithe Bill.

your lordship has done me the honour of addressing me. It is no more than due both to the importance of the subject and to the eminence of your lordship's character.

As I perceive, however, by the first page, that your lordship has, very naturally, only seen the report which appeared in the public journals, I beg leave to transmit to your lordship a correct copy of the speech which I delivered upon that occasion. Your lordship will observe that in what I stated of the identity of the main doctrines of the Christian faith, as professed by the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, I carefully grounded myself upon what had fallen a day or two before from the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is possible that I may have misstated or overstated his Grace I may have omitted some qualifications and distinctions that he introduced; but I intended to repeat the substance of what the Archbishop had said without omission or addition.

The sentiment that the Roman Catholic religion ought not to be treated like a superstition founded upon imposture or disgraced by barbarism, is taken from a book of great power and piety, lately published entitled the 'Remains of Alexander Knox,' and to which your lordship's attention may probably have been drawn I have written this much that I may lose no time in exonerating myself in your lordship's opinion from having spoken upon such a subject without consideration or without authority.

The chief matter for consideration during the latter part of the recess was the Lord Chancellorship, which obviously could not be left much longer in commission. Before matters were settled, Lord Melbourne had a difficult correspondence with the Attorney-General, who was by no means backward in pressing his claims.

Lord Melbourne to Sir John Campbell. Panshanger, December 31, 1835.

I RECEIVED your letter yesterday morning at Woburn Abbey, and was prevented by my journey hither from answering it, as I otherwise should have done, by the post of yesterday evening. You will give me credit for sincerity when I assure you that I have read it with great pain. I feel convinced that you are actuated by the purest and most honourable principles; I entirely appreciate your devotion to what you consider the right cause, and the services which you have rendered, and I feel convinced that, whatever may be the issue of this unfortunate correspondence, your political conduct will remain unaffected by any feelings of anger or disappointment. I had, I own, entertained a sanguine expectation that the peculiarities of the present time, and of our actual situation, would have induced you to acquiesce in the arrangement which we have thought it our duty to propose. You say you do not mean to reason the matter with me, and it would be presumptuous if I were to attempt to reason it with you, who are so much more familiar with the whole subject. I will only observe that, with respect to the separation of Law and Equity, I have often heard others express the same opinion as yourself; but still the separation has gone on, establishing and defining itself more and more distinctly, until it has become complete, and, however we may lament or condemn, we must yield to the irresistible tendency of events and accommodate ourselves to those circumstances which we find in existence and which we cannot change.[1] With regard to the honour of the Bar, &c., the principal object which we have to bear in view

[1] The real reason was, not that Sir John Campbell was a common lawyer, but that the King objected to him *in toto*; but, of course, Lord Melbourne could hardly mention it.

is the public welfare, the benefit of the litigant parties, the due administration of justice; and much as I respect the profession of the law, I cannot hold that their opinions and feelings are to be taken into account, except inasmuch as they are founded in reason and are evidence of the convenience or inconvenience of the course which they either approve or condemn.

I have only to repeat my expression of the deep sorrow with which I have read your letter, to express my strong hope that you will reconsider it, and at any rate that you will not act in the matter with anything of haste and precipitation.

Lord Melbourne to Sir Herbert Taylor. South Street, June 12, 1836.

His Majesty will naturally have been somewhat surprised at so long a time having been suffered to elapse without his hearing any more of the arrangements respecting the Great Seal, of which I have had the honour to receive his Majesty's approbation. The fact is that some of the obstacles which were foreseen have arisen, and I have been engaged in attempting to remove them. Lord Brougham has made no objection whatever, and, indeed, the state of his health is such as to preclude him from attending much at present to public affairs, but quiet and repose will restore him, and with his recovery his activity must be expected to return. The feelings of the Attorney-General have been much, and perhaps not unnaturally, excited. It certainly has been usual that persons in his situation should receive the offer of such great offices as are now vacant, and nothing but a deep sense of public duty, and a feeling that a change of system has become necessary, would have induced me to have altered the usual course upon the present occasion; and perhaps it is, though unavoidable, somewhat

unfortunate that this alteration takes place in the person of Sir John Campbell, who is undoubtedly the first common lawyer in Westminster Hall. His loss, under any circumstances, would be severely felt by his Majesty's Government; under the present circumstances it would be still more prejudicial; and I trust, therefore, that his Majesty will forgive me for having taken rather extraordinary measures in order to retain him by pledging myself to advise his Majesty, if he will remain Attorney-General, to raise Lady Campbell immediately to the peerage. This, though an unusual, is not an unprecedented course. It was taken, I understand, in the case of Lord Mansfield, when it was desirable for the Government to retain him in the House of Commons; and I trust, therefore, that his Majesty will be graciously pleased to think that I have acted for the best, and will enable me to fulfil the undertaking into which I have entered. This being settled, the arrangements may be declared, and I will again write regarding the mode and time of carrying them into effect. I should be most anxious to receive his Majesty's most gracious answer.

Lord Mulgrave to Lord Melbourne. Private. D. C., February 23 [1836].

It has occurred to me that in the loose observations I threw out yesterday in reference to your enquiry as to the present state of the country, I did not make sufficiently obvious the extent to which all serious offences have at present diminished, whilst I dwelt much upon my own conviction that, as some of the causes of disturbance were permanent, its occasional and partial recurrence must still be expected. But there is nothing like figures upon this sort of question, and to show that some improvement has taken place in the general condition of the country, and that all serious offences, those arising

from *combination* for *land* as well as for political causes, have been much reduced, I went over again this morning for your benefit the monthly returns for the four provinces for the month of January (one month later than my last letter to John Russell on this subject), and I find that, of the second table, containing all 'Outrages of a murderous or political character, or having intimidation for their object, or *resulting* from *combination*,' the number in the whole of Ireland for the whole of January 1835 was 709, for January 1836 308; and if one deducts 100 from the former number on account of the burnings of Loughgall in the county of Armagh—which swelled the returns for the province of Ulster unusually in that month last year—still, the total reduction from six hundred to three may fairly be stated at one-half of the whole crime of this description in the country. This also including a temporary increase of a third, from sixty to ninety, in the county of Tipperary, which was at its worst in the month of January, the returns for the first fortnight of this month showing a most marked improvement. We have this morning received accounts from Major Wriothesley, commanding a detachment in that county, of the capture of a whole armed gang of eleven men, with the great leader of the whole banditti, a 'Captain Long' as he is called. I trust that this will have excellent effect.

The session of 1836 was not productive of much legislation. The Irish Tithe Bill was again lost, through the rejection of the Appropriation clauses by the House of Lords. The following letter relates to the regulations affecting the building of new churches:—

Lord Melbourne to the Archbishop of

THE clauses are erased from the Bill, and therefore there is an end of them; but I am a little surprised at your objections to them, as I

Dublin. Confidential. South Street, August 17, 1836.

thought it had been one of your principles that all authority, however high, either in station or in talent, required superintendence and check. For God's sake be upon your guard against idola, whether of situation or of occupation. When people get employed in any pursuit, and more particularly in that of church building, glebe-house building, school erecting, &c. &c., they are apt to lose sight of every other consideration except the promotion of these immediate objects. This is apt to lead to too exclusive projects, and in order to correct this disposition nothing is so effectual as the revision of a fresh eye. In the past history of the world no feelings have been more extravagant and expensive, nor have imposed heavier burthens upon mankind, than those of piety and charity, and none require to be more carefully watched in future.

A similar fate attended the Irish Municipal Corporation Bill, which had been introduced in the previous session and then dropped. When it was first introduced the King had raised considerable objections to the measure.

Lord Melbourne to the King. Downing Street, August 15, 1835.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and is much concerned to hear from Lord John Russell that your Majesty has remarked with dissatisfaction upon the Bill for the regulation of Municipal Corporations having been introduced into the House of Commons without having been first submitted to your Majesty. Viscount Melbourne chiefly laments that this omission, for which he is solely responsible, took place, and he is well aware that the different circumstances of the countries made the English measure not necessarily a precedent for that which it may be

fit to adopt in Ireland. Viscount Melbourne humbly solicits your Majesty's indulgence for this neglect, which is to be attributed, together with any other of which he may have been guilty, to the extreme and urgent pressure of business. The report upon this subject proves that, as far as abuse was concerned, some measure of this nature was much more urgently required in Ireland than in England, some measure must be adopted and cannot long be postponed, and Viscount Melbourne trusts that the measure which has been introduced will be found to be safe and prudent; but Viscount Melbourne would be deceiving your Majesty if he were to conceal that any measure remedial of the present system must of necessity add to the power and weight of those who constitute the majority of the people of that country.

The King to Lord Melbourne. Windsor Castle, August 16, 1835.

THE King has learnt with satisfaction from Viscount Melbourne's letter of yesterday, as well as from Lord John Russell's, that his Majesty's letters to the latter on the subject of the Bill for the regulation of Municipal Corporations in Ireland had been communicated to him.

His Majesty assures Viscount Melbourne that he entirely acquits him of the disposition, upon this or any occasion, to omit to submit any measure to him which may require his sanction before it is brought under discussion, or to withhold information which it is necessary his Majesty should possess with the view to the honest and conscientious discharge of his own duty. The King is sensible of the extent and the importance of Viscount Melbourne's arduous and harassing occupations, and he is not so unreasonable as to expect that his valuable time should be wasted in commu-

nications and explanations which may be considered immaterial.

But the proposed regulation of the municipal corporations of the United Kingdom is one of the most important measures which has at any time been brought under the consideration of the sovereign of this country and of the two other branches of the legislature, and it involves radical changes (his Majesty does not mean to apply the word invidiously) which affect prerogative, privileges, and local rights of the most ancient dates.

The King has always looked upon Viscount Melbourne as a firm supporter of the Constitutional Monarchy of this country, and he believes him to be a *Conservative* in the truest sense of the word, and to as great a degree as is his Majesty himself; though candour obliges him to own that he does not give credit to all his colleagues for the same feeling, and still less so to many of those upon whose votes in the House of Commons the Government is unfortunately obliged to rely for adequate support. It is to these circumstances, as well as to an impression, and possibly a very reasonable one, which his Majesty conceives Viscount Melbourne may harbour of the necessity of yielding in some degree to the 'spirit of the times,' that his Majesty ascribes the concurrence of Viscount Melbourne in measures of which the character may not appear to him altogether consistent with the high Conservative feelings for which he gives him credit.

The King stated to Lord John Russell that the Irish Municipal Corporation Bill had been brought to a second reading without having been submitted to him (nor has his Majesty yet seen it), and Lord John Russell replied that Viscount Melbourne had considered it unnecessary to bring it under his Majesty's notice, as

the general character and provisions of the two Bills were similar. But his Majesty observed in reply (Viscount Melbourne appears to admit this), that the different circumstances of the two countries must render the English measure in many respects inapplicable to Ireland.

No person can feel this more deeply than does the King, no man can lament more sincerely than he does that the state of Ireland should differ so essentially from that of England, and that abuses have been shown to prevail in Ireland which call for remedial measures, general and local, much more urgently than in England. But this is the very ground of his Majesty's anxiety for the adoption of measures which shall be safe and prudent, as well as efficient; and that anxiety is not a little increased by a contemplation of the necessity to which Viscount Melbourne has adverted of adding, by any measures remedial of the present system, to the power and weight of those who constitute the majority of the people of that country—namely, the Roman Catholics.

The King has never admitted any prejudice against that portion of his subjects. He believes them to be in spirit, and from the nature of their religious doctrine and principles, as loyal and as well affected as any other class—nay, he believes them, when not subject to the influence of a mischievous agitation, to be better inclined to royalty, and to the support of established authority, than the generality of other Dissenters from the Established Church. But when his Majesty looks to the influence which is at this period exercised by Mr. D. O'Connell, the declared advocate of Repeal of the Union and of separation between Church and State, the exciter and promoter of resistance to legal authority, when he looks to the active exertions of his

coadjutors and agents in these works of iniquity, it is impossible that his Majesty should not also contemplate with apprehension the extension to Ireland of any measure of popular character which may tend to consolidate and to strengthen the power and the influence, not of the Government, but of those who wish to subvert it and to destroy also the Established Church; and he repeats to Viscount Melbourne that he could not help noticing with suspicion and dread the exultation manifested by Mr. D. O'Connell and his clique when they became acquainted with the provisions of the Bill for the regulation of Municipal Corporations in Ireland.

The King has never objected to the admission of his Roman Catholic subjects in Ireland to civil rights and privileges, but he is conscious that all that tends to increase their power and weight should be introduced with extreme caution, and that great attention should be paid to the reservation of the means of controlling the use of that power, and of checking its abuse, so long as Mr. O'Connell shall unfortunately succeed in perverting the minds of so large a portion of the people of Ireland, and of directing them to purposes opposed to allegiance and inconsistent with the welfare of that country and the security of the empire.

During the session the one-sided character of the Ecclesiastical Commission caused Lord Melbourne some misgivings, and he wrote on the subject to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Howley:—

South Street, June 29, 1836.

I THINK it likely, and indeed it has been suggested to me, that upon the consideration of the general Bill in the House of Commons serious objection may be taken to that part of it which constitutes the present Ecclesiastical Commission a permanent body for carrying into effect the whole of the

intended measures.[1] It is certainly rather a strong measure to delegate such an authority, even though it be confined to certain settled and specified purposes, and the persons who are to exercise this power will, undoubtedly, be considered and scrutinised with great jealousy; and those who are Commissioners by virtue of their office, it will be said, may be removed at any moment, and probably will be changed before the Commission shall have discharged the duties which are intrusted to it.

Their names, therefore, afford us no permanent security, and when they are gone the rest of the Commission will remain entirely of one cast and colour of opinion and character. This is an objection which appears to me to have some weight in itself, and which will certainly exercise a considerable influence upon the opinion of many; and it is therefore worth while to consider whether there are no means of obviating it. With this view it might, perhaps, be advisable to introduce some other names, lay and clerical, which might vary in some degree the general complexion of the Commission, and enable it to command that assent and confidence which some might not be disposed to place in it. I wish your Grace would consider this matter, which appears to me to be of importance with reference to the success of the measure.

The session, as a whole, was a failure, owing to the unrelenting hostility of the majority of the House of Lords. The Government could only set off the passing of the English Tithe Commutation Act, the Marriage Act, and the reduction of the paper duties against the loss of the Irish Tithe Bill, the Irish Municipal Corporation Bill, and the English Corporation Amendment Bill. It was not the fault of Ministers, and at the close of the session there was considerable force in Lord

[1] The Tithe Commutation Bill, which became law in that session.

Melbourne's application to Lord Lyndhurst of the Earl of Bristol's saying about Lord Strafford: 'The malignity of his practices is hugely aggravated by his vast talents, whereof God hath given him the use, but the Devil the application.' They seriously debated whether it was possible to go on in face of an actively hostile majority,[1] but though an autumn session was decided as being out of the question, they again confronted their enemies in the spring of 1837.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Mulgrave. Confidential. Brocket Hall. October 1, 1836.

I HAVE this morning received yours of the 28th ultimo. The matter stands thus. When the Government was formed a certain number of names were mentioned to me, to the promotion of whom there would be permanent and decided objection, and amongst these names was included that of Shiel. I, of course, protested against this exclusion, and said that I reserved the right to bring any one of these names under consideration; and so the matter was adjusted, or rather left as a subject of future difference. Now I think that you will agree with me that in these circumstances I should not be justified in advancing any of these persons, or in suffering them to be advanced by any member of my Government, without giving notice of the intention, and bringing their names specially under consideration. Now the question is, whether it is prudent to stir this question at present and in this instance. The impression will be that one of these names has been brought forward already, and I shall have the same take place with respect to all the rest, one after another. But then you will say, although you protest against this principle of exclusion, you, in fact, admit it, and give it full practical effect. But the question is one of present prudence. I am aware that it must come to be decided at last, and

[1] Lord Broughton's 'Recollections,' in the *Edinburgh Review*.

there is nothing I dislike so much as this deferring and temporising; at the same time it is sometimes wise and, indeed, necessary. This point of the Irish Roman Catholics and the Church in Ireland is that upon which we are the weakest in England, upon which we have the strongest feeling against us, and upon which it would be the most disadvantageous to us to come to issue. But the state of the Irish Bar being such as you report it, to an issue upon it we shall come; as I quite agree with you that the passing over the Attorney- and Solicitor-General[1] now is only getting rid of the difficulty for the present, and that we must ultimately, and probably at no great distance of time, insist upon promoting those who are best qualified for it by their professional eminence without reference to their religious creed.

What you say of the Bar presents rather a prospect of difficulty, because, if there are no Protestant Liberal barristers fit to fill the high law offices, there are, of course, none fit for seats upon the Bench; and yet, if we remain in, we must expect vacancies. I wish you would just give me a short statement of those who are at present the leading advocates at the Irish Bar, with a statement of their character, political and otherwise. What character has Shiel in his profession? Is he considered a competent lawyer? When Liverpool's administration were not, indeed, in a similar situation in Scotland, but in something of a similar situation to that in which we are in Ireland—that is, when they had no lawyers of their own politics fit for the Bench they took the most eminent persons—such as Gillies and Moncrieffe—from the ranks of their opponents; and

[1] Mr. O'Loghlen, the first Roman Catholic who had received office since the Revolution.

I do not believe that their course was very much condemned by their own partisans. This, however, cannot be done—even if there are the means of doing it—in Ireland nor in the present times. Upon the whole I think it would be imprudent to press this at present; but if you are of opinion that it would be worse to put him off, and that you cannot make a satisfactory arrangement otherwise, I will consider the matter further. With respect to the Bench, I am clearly of opinion that it would be best to do our utmost to avoid difficulties at present by adopting the arrangement which you suggested in your former letter, leaving the battle to be fought upon the next occasion, which cannot be very far distant.

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Poulett Thomson. South Street, January 1, 1837.

As I have quite made up my own mind, I think it best to acquaint you that I have done so. I have considered the question as coolly and impartially as I could, and not without a due sense of its importance, and I still feel and think that I cannot give way upon this point of making the Ballot an open question. We have never laid great stress upon it nor very much pressed to vote against it those who had declared themselves for it. I am ready to conduct the Government, in this respect, in the manner in which it has been conducted, but I cannot now make any alteration. I should feel myself disgraced by doing so, and should not be able to reply to those observations which I feel would be justly made upon me.

The same to the same. South Street, January 13, 1837.

I MEAN that everything should stand exactly as it did, and you, of course, amongst the rest, precisely in the same position which you so exactly describe; that no alteration should be

made now and under the present circumstances. I feel that I could not bear up against—not the obloquy, but the just accusation of doing so, and I do not think that, when they come to try it, others would find that they could either.

It may, as you say, be fatal to the Government. It probably will; and that consideration has made me pause so long. But so, I am convinced, would the other course; and with disgrace.

Meanwhile a great meeting of Protestants had assembled at Dublin and denounced the policy of the Government. It was evidently with great difficulty that Lord Melbourne prevented the Lord Lieutenant from resorting to measures of retaliation.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Mulgrave. South Street, January 30, 1837.

I WAS obliged to start on Saturday morning for Brighton before the post came in, and therefore did not receive your letter of the 25th until that evening, and upon my return I found your two other letters, but too late to write upon them by the mail of yesterday. The matter which you mention in them is of great importance, and ought to be proceeded on deliberately and without any appearance of precipitation or passion; it will require that the resolution should be read with great care, which I shall not have time to do until after to-morrow. It will not do to proceed upon anything of the past in the speeches, nor upon anything in the resolutions except the intentional allegation of false facts. False inferences from facts all men are liable to draw. There are, however, one or two observations which I wish to make at present. It is a matter of too great magnitude for you to act in, although you may have the power, without the knowledge and sanction of the King. It would be not only improper, but it would be the height of impolicy

to do so. The King is the fairest man in the world when matters are laid fairly before him, but he is naturally and justly impatient of anything resembling an attempt to carry him into measures clandestinely, and without his knowledge or consent. It must also be considered that, if you take strong measures against the temporary and occasional meetings, you will be much pressed, and in a manner difficult to be resisted, to proceed against the Association,[1] a body of a permanent character, and in which very violent resolutions have been adopted. There can hardly be a proceeding more unjustifiable, whether considered personally or as a violation of the freedom of Parliamentary debate, than the resolution which that assembly passed against Lyndhurst.

Again, you must remember that John Russell, in the debate upon the Orange lodges,[2] distinctly said that, if the Protestants have any complaints to make, let them not meet in these secret societies, but let them call public constitutional meetings, there state what they conceive to be their wrongs, and petition the Throne and the Parliament for the redress of them. This is exactly what these persons have done, and we have always held that the exercise of the right of petitioning should not be looked into with too much strictness and nicety. The objection to the Orange lodges was that they were secret, and then their being exclusive was an aggravation of their danger. But it is a necessary constitutional right that classes of people should be able to meet together and discuss their own

[1] The National Association, which, though established nominally to petition Parliament for the passing of the Irish Tithe and Municipal Bills, was really the old Association in another shape.

[2] The great debates on the Orange lodges were in 1835, but the question was renewed in 1836.

particular interests—trades, persons engaged in speculations, &c. The Dissenters might meet to consider their own complaints, and it would be very reasonable that they should not be troubled at such a meeting with the presence of Churchmen, who are opposed to the very object of the meeting itself. Pray do consider all these matters carefully. You have a great power in Ireland, in consequence of the cordial assistance of the great body of the people. You are accused by your adversaries of using that power violently and tyrannically. For God's sake let us be very careful that we furnish no real ground for such an accusation.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Mulgrave. Downing Street, February 1, 1837.

We this morning held the Cabinet which I mentioned to you in my letter of yesterday. We carefully read the resolutions of the Protestant meeting in Dublin and all your letters upon the subject, addressed to both John Russell and myself, and we considered the whole matter with that care and attention which was due to its own importance and to the strong feeling and opinion which you have expressed upon it. I enclose you the confidential opinions of our law officers here, which I think you will feel to be very strong against the view that you have taken.

It struck us in the first instance that there could be no question except as to Lord Downshire. He, as chairman of the meeting, was of course cognisant of and party to the resolutions, which he put from the chair.[1]

[1] The petition to the House of Lords embodying the resolutions protested against (1) the attacks upon Protestantism, displayed in the persecution of individual ministers and the refusal to pay tithes, a refusal promoted by agitation; (2) the conduct of the Government in not suppressing the Association, and in its injurious exercise of the prerogative of mercy.

The Earl of Donoughmore moved a resolution of fact, to which no objection can be taken further than that you may differ from it, in an unexceptional speech. It is, perhaps, the strict law that a man who attends a meeting is responsible for all that is said and done; but this can never in justice be enforced, and it surely would not do for us to be the persons to attempt to carry it into literal execution.

You state the meeting, upon the whole, to have been a failure, and upon this statement it occurred to us that it would be highly impolitic to take any step which must have the effect of giving to these proceedings a weight and importance which they do not already possess. The resolution moved by Colonel Conolly appeared to us to be the only one upon which it was possible to rely as the foundation of such a proceeding as you propose; and when we came to consider that resolution, it seemed to us that it did not state the pardons you have granted, and the appointments which you have made, to have been granted and made with the design of producing the effects which are said to have arisen from them.

Upon the whole, we were decidedly of opinion that it would be imprudent and inexpedient to proceed further against either Lord Downshire or Lord Donoughmore, or against any of the persons who were present and took a part in the business. At the same time we thought that the violence and the prejudice with which they had acted were amply sufficient to justify the Lord Chancellor in not consulting them upon the appointment of magistrates and in paying little or no attention to their recommendations.

I can assure you that the only difficulty which we felt in coming to this determination arose from our great

unwillingness to decide against your strong impression and recommendation. But the case appeared so clear that we could not do otherwise; and I myself go the full length of the Solicitor-General that, though there is in the resolutions much violence and much injustice, there is no matter treated which is not a fair subject of discussion, nor in a manner or in language which would not be justifiable, supposing the charges to be well founded. There are no false facts stated. Assistant barristers have been appointed and criminals have been pardoned. Mistaken inferences from facts and the attributing bad and interested motives are common to all political discussions. I have already stated in my former letters many other reasons which lead to the same conclusion, and I cannot but entertain the hope that, upon reconsidering their force and bearing, you will be convinced by them.

The same to the same. February 4, 1837.

I AM sure you will believe me when I apprise you that it gives me the deepest concern to find that we take such very different views of this question, and that you adhere so decidedly to your first opinion. Some of the difference perhaps arises from the different situations in which we are placed, and the different points from which we view the matter; but I feel confident that you will also admit that, however ready I may be to defer to your judgment, and however anxious to act in entire union with you, I could not consent with my eyes open to commit what it appears to me would be an error, and what upon consideration strikes me as having been a great blunder in former administrations who have resorted to such measures. Such is the character which Pitt's dismissal of the Duke of Norfolk bears in my

eyes.[1] It was a proof rather of a consciousness of weakness than of strength. Pitt was then in circumstances which might have enabled him safely to overlook anything of the kind—he was master of a decided majority in both Houses of Parliament—and his showing so much irritation and resentment was rather liable to the imputation of not feeling either so strong as he really was or so right as he affirmed himself to be. I wish to avoid the same error and not to run into it, and thus to give another occasion for the remark that all administrations are in fact in this conduct the same. Another objection is that, as a mark of disapprobation and animadversion the step is so utterly weak and impotent. I know not what the weight or influence of that meeting may have been, but I feel persuaded that such a course would immediately add to it, and raise both Downshire and Donoughmore into an importance which they do not at present hope for. Your last letters confine the question to one resolution, upon which I have already written to you. Now, suppose Lord Downshire had raised that resolution in Parliament, would you have proposed to dismiss him for it? and yet in these constitutional meetings is not the same latitude of discussion to be permitted as in the Houses of Lords and Commons? The magistrates and deputy lieutenants who were dismissed for attending tithe meetings advised resistance to the laws, and I call your attention to the distinctions drawn by our Attorney-General in this respect in his letter.

I have only again to repeat my great sorrow at this difference of opinion, and my anxious hope that it may

[1] The Duke of Norfolk was in 1788 dismissed from the Lord Lieutenancy of the West Riding for speaking at a Whig dinner at the 'Crown and Anchor.' (Lord Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, chap. xxv.)

make no difference whatever in our future agreement or in the conduct of co-operation and correspondence which has hitherto subsisted between us.

The same to the same. Confidential. South Street, February 7, 1837.

I SAY no more upon the subject of our late correspondence further than this, that I entirely appreciate and deeply feel the manner in which you have acted, and the sacrifice which your zeal for the public interest has induced you to make of your own feelings and opinions. I will only make one general observation, and that because it strikes my mind very forcibly.

You are engaged in a very difficult task, no other than that of carrying the Roman Catholic Relief Bill into actual practical effect. The violent opposition of the high Protestant party to the passing of that Bill, and their violent conduct since its passing, have unfortunately but necessarily excluded from high office in Ireland many of the men who by their rank, station, and abilities were the best qualified for it. You are, therefore, transferring all the power and influence which can be derived from appointments from the Irish Protestants, who have hitherto enjoyed them almost exclusively, to the Roman Catholics, and to those whom I presume they detest, as it is natural they should, much more than they do the Roman Catholics, those Protestants who have embraced the liberal and conciliatory side of the question. This process, of course, greatly irritates, by affecting their interests and still more by wounding their pride; and in my opinion much allowance ought to be made for those who are undergoing such a very disagreeable and indeed painful operation.

Now with respect to what I said about the Association. It was as follows—that I saw its establishment

with concern, that I did not think the grounds upon which it was established sufficient to justify so extreme a measure, and that there were some of its proceedings, as there always would be in such assemblies, of which I could not express approbation. Now this is my real opinion. I felt the inconvenience of having to state it, but as the Duke of Wellington had adverted to the subject I could not help doing it, and, after all, the declaration of opinion could not have been long delayed. I did not allude particularly to this Orange meeting in Dublin, but I did observe generally upon the Conservative meetings throughout the country. I think it would not be worth while for you to come over upon the debate upon the petition; but if you wish anything particular to be said, if you will instruct either me or Lansdowne or Holland, or whom you please, it will of course be done. I suspect the real object of the Association to be the raising of the O'Connell tribute in another form. I suspect that it is intended to vote him a sum out of the rent; otherwise, why do we hear nothing of the tribute itself?

The Church Rates Bill was introduced early in the session.

Lord Melbourne to the King. South Street, February 5, 1837.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and begs respectfully to submit the heads of a Bill which your Majesty's confidential servants propose to submit to Parliament for the abolition of the present mode of levying Church rate, and of providing an adequate fund for the repair of the edifices and other requisites of divine worship. The imposition of Church rate, and the existing manner of assessing and collecting it, are amongst the most ancient of the institutions of the country. They were not authorised by any statute, but rest upon th

common law of the country; and it appears by an ordinance in the time of Edward I., five hundred and fifty years ago, that it was at that time the recognised law and established practice that the chancel should be repaired at the expense of the rector, and nave or body of the church by the parishioners at large. This was before the Established Church in its present form, or any of the sects of Dissenters, were either heard or thought of. The rate was agreed upon and the amount settled by the ratepayers of the parish. This power, which was evidently given in former times only that the inhabitants might themselves decide whether the proposed expenses were necessary, and whether they were not too large, has in our day been extended to the refusal of rates entirely upon other grounds—viz. upon the broad principle that those who dissent from the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church, and who do not partake of the benefits of her worship, ought not to be compelled to pay any part of her expenses. This mode of acting, though it has not hitherto been pushed to the full extent to which the Dissenters have the power to carry it, has already produced in different places much unseemly discord and contention and very capricious and unsatisfactory results, the rate being granted in some places and entirely refused in others, with all the consequent inconveniences. In order to put an end to these conflicts, to establish a certain system, and to relieve the Dissenters from a charge from which it appears to Viscount Melbourne as much the interest of the Church as theirs that they should be exempted, the accompanying plan is simply to obtain the necessary funds from the property actually possessed by the Church, and for this purpose to pursue the same course with the landed property of the Church

of England as has been already pursued with the property of the Crown and Church of England in Ireland: to let the lands at their real value, and out of the funds so raised to appropriate the necessary sum to the payment of the Church rate, and to form a reserve fund to be applied in the manner specified. To this is to be added a scheme for raising a certain sum by pew-rents to be devoted to the same purposes.

Some opposition is, of course, to be expected to this proposition on the part of the present lessees, but it is hoped that the advantages which are held out will be sufficient to insure the acquiescence of the majority; and even if it were not, Viscount Melbourne does not perceive that they are treated with any injustice, or that they have less favourable consideration than was formerly given by Mr. Pitt to the lessees of the Crown. Viscount Melbourne respectfully transmits a copy of the reports upon that subject, which will recall to your Majesty's mind the objections made to that measure, which, however, was carried into effect, with the result of an improvement of the property of the Crown to the extent of which your Majesty is well aware.

Viscount Melbourne is compelled to add, with very great concern, that from correspondence which has taken place between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord John Russell, Viscount Melbourne fears that the support of his Grace, and consequently of many others of the reverend bench, cannot be reckoned upon. Viscount Melbourne is very reluctant to take any step in a matter relating to the interests of the Church contrary to the opinion of such authorities; but Viscount Melbourne considers the final settlement of this question of such paramount importance to the State as well as to the Church that, being persuaded that this is the

best if not the only mode of effecting such a settlement, Viscount Melbourne and his colleagues deem it to be their duty, notwithstanding this discouragement and disadvantage, to submit this measure to the deliberation and decision of Parliament.

The same to the same. South Street, February 13, 1837.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and begs leave respectfully to acknowledge your Majesty's gracious communication upon the scheme for the abolition of Church rates which Viscount Melbourne, upon the part of your Majesty's confidential servants, had the honour of submitting to your Majesty. Viscount Melbourne is deeply sensible of the attention which your Majesty has bestowed upon the subject, and of the fairness and candour with which your Majesty has considered it, and the limitations and modifications which your Majesty has suggested will receive on the part of your Majesty's servants that careful and attentive consideration which is due to their own weight and to the high quarter from which they proceed. Viscount Melbourne would, however, be wanting in the duty which he owes to your Majesty if he omitted or delayed to state his own strong opinion that it will neither be for the credit of the administration nor for the general welfare to alter the original plan in the manner which has been proposed. Viscount Melbourne will not enter into argument at present further than humbly to represent to your Majesty that your assent to the introduction of this Bill into Parliament by your servants is only an assent to its being there fully considered and discussed; and the history of the Appropriation clause, to which your Majesty has referred, is a sufficient proof that, if a strong opinion should prevail either in the Lords or

Commons that the objections which have occurred to your Majesty are good and valid, and that the measure cannot be entertained without prejudice or injury to the Established Church, there is little chance of its being presented to your Majesty for your ultimate constitutional sanction. If, on the other hand, the opposite view should prevail, and it should be thought, after full enquiry and discussion, that the scheme is prudent and wise and compatible with the safety of the religious institutions of the country, your Majesty will naturally feel yourself justified in concurring with the two Houses of Parliament upon the subject.

Viscount Melbourne believes the Established Church to be well and firmly fixed in the feelings and affections of the majority of the people of this country, and he is confident that all attempts to shake its stability will prove fruitless and unavailing; but Viscount Melbourne is fully persuaded that neither the ministers of the Church nor the friends of the Church can take a more imprudent and dangerous step than that of standing upon the present claim of Church rates.

The King to Lord Melbourne. Brighton, February 14, 1837.

THE King has received Viscount Melbourne's letter of yesterday, in reply to his communication upon the scheme for the abolition of Church rates, from which his Majesty rejoices to learn that Viscount Melbourne admits that he has entered with fairness and candour into the subject. The King, however, desires that it may be clearly understood that, in stating his sentiments and the objections which he entertains, on principle, to the proposed measure, he had not the least intention of withholding his assent to the introduction of the Bill for the consideration of Parliament, or of interfering with the constitutional course

which is pursued with respect to this and other questions to which his Government may feel it to be their duty to call the attention of the legislature, sensible as he is that they must undergo the mature deliberation and discussion of both Houses of Parliament before they can be submitted for his Majesty's ultimate sanction. The King may have his own opinions upon the subject, and he deems it his duty to communicate them to Viscount Melbourne for such consideration as he and his colleagues may be disposed to give to them before they finally commit themselves.

Lord Melbourne to the King. South Street, February 17, 1837.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and begs respectfully to acquaint your Majesty that your Majesty's suggestions upon the proposed plan for the abolition of Church rates have been carefully and attentively considered by your Majesty's confidential servants. The accompanying memorandum and supplementary remarks, which have been drawn up by Mr. Rice, who has charged himself with the duty of proposing the Bill to the House of Commons, will fully lay before your Majesty the reasons upon which, notwithstanding they feel the force of some of your Majesty's observations, and are deeply sensible of the kind spirit and gracious manner in which those observations are made, your Majesty's servants still think that, amidst difficulties, it is the most prudent course to persevere in the measure which they have advised. They do not, of course, pledge themselves to adhere obstinately to all the details of the plan which has been submitted to your Majesty. They are conscious that many of them may possibly require alteration, and they are of course prepared to admit any changes which may be found

upon discussion to be required by reason and justice.

Viscount Melbourne will not conceal from your Majesty his own individual opinion that this question is swelled by the eagerness of the conflicting parties and the love of public discussion which prevails into an importance far beyond that which it really possesses. It seems to Viscount Melbourne a small grievance for the Dissenters to insist upon renouncing, and a small privilege for the Church to be anxious to retain. With this view Viscount Melbourne would not have been unwilling to have left the present law as it stood, with all its inconveniences, which are certainly many and great, and may probably be increased; but it was thought that, after the admission which had been made by the introduction of Lord Althorp's Bill of the necessity of some measure, that this course was no longer left open either to this or to any other Ministry.

The same to the same. South Street, February 20, 1837.

Viscount Melbourne, in obedience to your Majesty's command, transmits copies of Mr. Rice's memorandum and supplementary remarks upon the subject of Church rates. Viscount Melbourne learns with great concern that your Majesty's objections to the proposed measure remain unabated and in full force. Viscount Melbourne can only say, in addition to what has been urged already by Mr. Rice himself, that he conceives the arrangement calculated in the highest degree to strengthen the Church establishment, by removing the great source of abuse and scandal which has been found to exist in the present mode of administering the landed property of the Church. The principal and most effectual attacks, made either upon the hierarchy generally or upon individual

bishops, have been founded upon their running their lives, as it is popularly called, against those of the lessees; also their granting concurrent leases to the members of their own family, and other secular practices which have arisen naturally and unavoidably from the weakness of human nature invested with such powers and placed in such situations. This is one great object attained.

Your Majesty is alarmed lest the general reasoning applied to these rates should also be extended to tithe. But a clear distinction has always been admitted to exist between the two burdens upon property. The tithe is a defined proportion of the produce which is charged upon the land by the operation of the law without the intervention or sanction of any individual or body of persons whatever. The Church rate is imposed by the vote of the ratepayers in vestry assembled. They have a right to grant or to withhold it, and to settle and determine its amount. This difference appears to Viscount Melbourne to be so clear and distinct as to render it impossible that the two payments should be confounded, or that the arguments which apply to the one should be held to affect the other.

With respect to the remark, that in case of the Crown property the Crown was a consenting party, which is not so with the Church, it is respectfully to be observed that, the Crown being a single individual, the consent was easily obtained and given. The dignitaries and ministers of the Church are so numerous a body that it would be hopeless to obtain from them a general concurrence, and recent as well as ancient experience sufficiently teaches us that the assent of the bishops would by no means secure that of the inferior clergy.

The Bill was not received with much enthusiasm. Mr.

Denison wrote to Lord Melbourne in March: 'Of our majority of 23 very many have spoken to me about the measure. No one likes it. With a party cordial, and with their approval, a majority of 23 may carry a measure as well as 100. But with a party full of misgivings, and likely to split on many points, a majority of 23 is a bad army to fight with.' Further, the majority of the Ecclesiastical Commission declined to act while the Bill was pending.[1] Lord Melbourne and the Ministerial members of the Commission wrote a vigorous protest, but they were probably glad when the death of William IV., on June 20, gave them a pretext for winding up what would have been a barren session.

The Ministerial members of the Ecclesiastical Commission to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Downing Street, March 20, 1837.

I HAVE already had the honour of acquainting your Grace that I have received the letter of the 10th inst., signed by your Grace and others of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and I have now further to inform your Grace that, having communicated that letter to those of my colleagues who are members of the Commission, I am authorised by them to express to your Grace the concern with which they have received the intimation of your Grace's intentions and sentiments.

As we fear that the decision communicated by your Grace renders it useless to enter into any argument, we content ourselves with observing that the passages cited by your Grace from our second report declare the opinion formed by the Commission upon the subject before them in the circumstances in which they were then placed, and with reference to the objects which they had in view; but that they were neither intended, nor can they be expected, to influence the general exercise of the discretion of the King's Government, nor to restrain them from the introduction of such measures as they may deem necessary or expedient.

[1] *Life of Bishop Blomfield*, chap. viii.

We have only further to remark that the statement that 'the augmentation of small livings, and the more adequate supply of the populous districts of the kingdom with the means of religious instruction, is the most important of all objects' is an assumption of the point in dispute.

We repeat the assurance that we received the protest, both against the principle of the measure and the manner of carrying it into effect, with great sorrow. We also lament the determination announced to have been taken by your Grace and the Commissioners, but we owe it to ourselves to declare that in the allegations of the letter we have not been able to perceive any sufficient reason or adequate justification for your temporarily withdrawing yourselves from the performance of duties which you have undertaken to execute, and for suspending the operations of the important commission with which you have been charged by his Majesty.

Your Grace and the other Commissioners, however, are the sole masters of your own conduct, and we can only acquiesce in a determination which at the same time we deeply lament.

CHAPTER X

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL AFFAIRS

1835–1837

THE King's interest in foreign affairs was great, and his knowledge of them considerable. Hence it is not altogether surprising that he should have been much offended when he discovered that the Czar Nicholas had been consulted before himself as to Lord Durham's mission to St. Petersburg. Lord Palmerston had sounded the Czar as to the arrangement, in order to prevent a repetition of the difficulty which had occurred in the case of Stratford Canning, whom Nicholas refused to receive.

Lord Melbourne to the King. South Street, June 29, 1835.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and has again to express his deep concern at the tenor of the communication which he has just received from your Majesty.

Viscount Melbourne has already stated to your Majesty the grounds and principles upon which both Viscount Palmerston and himself have acted in this affair, and he much laments to find that the conduct which they have pursued still meets with your Majesty's serious disapprobation.

Viscount Melbourne is very unfortunate in not being able to perceive that it was made to appear that your Majesty was a mere cipher, or that your consent must follow as a matter of course, provided that of the Emperor

of Russia could be obtained; still less is Viscount Melbourne aware that that consent was obtained by any act of submission on the part of your Majesty's Government.

It is Viscount Melbourne's duty to obey your Majesty's commands in communicating, with great reluctance, to Viscount Palmerston your Majesty's letter dated the 28th inst., from Windsor Castle. But Viscount Melbourne, in performing this act, must by no means be considered as concurring in any censure of a Minister with whom he has entirely agreed, or of an act to which he has himself been a party.

Viscount Melbourne feels himself to labour under the whole of that disapprobation which your Majesty is pleased to express of the conduct of Viscount Palmerston and Viscount Melbourne is grieved that he has incurred your Majesty's displeasure; but he owes it to himself to declare that he does not feel himself to be either in guilt or in error, but is firmly of opinion that in this matter he has rendered no inconsiderable service to your Majesty by proper and justifiable means.

A still more serious divergence of opinion occurred on the occasion of Sir Charles Grey's being appointed a member of the Canadian Commission. He was told by the King that Canada had been won by the sword, and that it was his duty to maintain the prerogative of the Crown, 'of which persons who ought to have known better have dared, even in my presence, to deny the existence.' The person who ought to have known better was the hapless Secretary for the Colonies.[1]

Draft of a Ministerial Remonstrance to the King. (Undated, but pro-

YOUR Majesty's confidential servants, having taken into their consideration a letter addressed to Lord Glenelg, signed by Sir Herbert Taylor beg your Majesty to be assured of their sincer

[1] *Greville*, iii. pp. 271, 272, 276.

bably of July 2 or 3, 1835.)

and dutiful obedience to your Majesty's wishes, and they trust that in your Majesty's communications with them, individually and collectively, your Majesty has never found them wanting in that respectful attention to your Majesty's opinions which your Majesty has a right to expect and to command. It was, therefore, with the most painful feelings of concern that they perceived in the observations which your Majesty addressed to Sir Charles Grey on his being sworn a member of the Privy Council expressions which might be understood to be directed against opinions submitted to your Majesty by some of your Majesty's confidential servants, and which they have since learned from Sir Herbert Taylor's letter were intended to apply to Lord Glenelg.

They feel themselves bound, therefore, in all humility, to submit to your Majesty's candid consideration the serious inconvenience which may thus be occasioned.

They cannot but feel a lively apprehension lest a censure passed in such a place upon a Minister for opinions expressed to your Majesty in your closet should have the effect of hereafter restraining the freedom of that advice which it is the duty of every one of your Majesty's confidential servants to offer to your Majesty without reserve; and they cannot refrain from expressing their regret, if anything had occurred in your Majesty's communications with the Minister in question which appeared to your Majesty to call for a manifestation of your royal displeasure, that an opportunity was not given him to remove, by such explanation as it might have been in his power to offer, the unfavourable impression made upon your Majesty's mind.

They also feel great alarm lest your Majesty's disapprobation, declared in the presence of your Privy Council and of the officers of State present on that

occasion, and addressed to an individual about to depart on an important commission in your Majesty's service, should tend to weaken the authority of your Majesty's Government by conveying the impression that with respect to the difficult duties which that individual was called upon to discharge, your Majesty's opinions are not in accordance with those of your confidential advisers.

They venture, therefore, with great deference to submit to your Majesty whether it be politically or constitutionally expedient that verbal disclosures, not previously intimated to any Minister, and for which, therefore, no Minister can be responsible, should be given by your Majesty; seeing that such directions may conflict, or be construed to conflict, with the written instructions issued by your Majesty after full consideration through your Secretary of State, which constitute the only rule by which those who are entrusted with the management of your Majesty's affairs ought to regulate their conduct.

It only remains for them to repeat that it is with the deepest sorrow that they have felt themselves compelled to lay these matters before your Majesty, and humbly to request for this representation your Majesty's favourable and candid consideration. They derive, however, some consolation from the consciousness, of which they beg leave to assure your Majesty, that they are wholly actuated by their attachment to your Majesty's person, by their devotion to your Majesty's interests, and by their anxiety to maintain the principles and practice of the constitution, and to secure the due and efficient execution of your Majesty's service.

The following is Lord Palmerston's view of the European situation at the time:—

To Lord Melbourne. March 1, 1836.

I HAVE just received this from the King, and perhaps you will speak to him about it to-morrow. My own opinion you well know, and that opinion has certainly not been shaken by the progress of events. Every day brings fresh proofs of the complete union of the three powers on every question of European policy,[1] and affords additional evidence that they are for the present what they told us three years ago they must be considered—namely, a unity. Here is Austria setting at defiance the keen sympathy which her Galician, Hungarian, and Transylvanian subjects have openly manifested for the Poles, and making herself the tool to execute a measure of Russian vengeance, in which she herself has no interest whatever, or, rather, with respect to which her interests are directly at variance with those of Russia.[2] Her motive is obvious. She found Russia determined to execute the measure; she knew the consequences of a Russian occupation, and to avert that evil she chose rather to encounter the unpopularity of the act and to perform it herself. But this is a fresh proof that in the present state of things we must not look to Metternich for any co-operation in measures destined to hold Russia in check. He will edge away to us and France if we and France boldly take up our own ground; but he will not and cannot join us in the first instance.

The answer, then, which Austria will infallibly make you will be that we all wish the same thing, and that therefore we ought all to concert as to the best means of obtaining our common object. That for this purpose we must establish a conference at some central place; and Vienna will be proposed, as best suited for

[1] Austria, Russia, and Prussia.

[2] The occupation of Cracow. See the next letter.

speedy communication with Petersburg, Constantinople, Berlin, Paris, and London. Are we to accept such an offer or to decline it? If we accept it, we enter into a labyrinth of negotiations out of which I see no clue. England and France will be in the minority. We were so about Belgium; but in that case the negotiation was in London, and the weight of a government on the spot speaking through its plenipotentiary gave that plenipotentiary double authority; while, also, England and France, being the two powers the closest to Belgium, had on that account the greatest means of action in the country which was the subject of negotiation. The reverse of all this would happen with respect to the Vienna conference, and we should be dragged along by the three against our opinions, or else compelled to withdraw. But a conference broken up by disagreement does not leave the parties upon the same terms on which it found them at its commencement, and Europe would in such a case be still more divided into two camps than it is now.

But say that we should refuse the proposed conference. What reason could we assign for doing so that would not be offensive to some of the parties concerned? Why invite Austria, and decline to concert with Russia and Prussia? Is that not plainly declaring that we trust the former and distrust the latter? And is not such a declaration, thus publicly made, affronting to the two latter powers? If you had a fair chance of detaching Austria from them by the offer, well and good; but we may be quite sure we shall do no such thing. We should, therefore, needlessly and unprofitably offend Russia and Prussia, be represented as having been baffled and repulsed in an attempt to separate Austria from her allies, and then, when England and

France came to sign their treaty, after having failed in their overture to Austria, that treaty would bear the character of a proceeding arising out of an ascertained difference with the three powers; whereas, if you begin with such a treaty and ask the others to accede to it, beginning with Austria, your proceeding bears the character only of a foundation upon which you hoped to build a subsequent concert with other powers.

The division of Europe into two camps, as Ancillon [1] calls it, to which you so much object, is the result of events beyond our control, and is the consequence of the French Revolution of July. The three powers fancy their interests lie in a direction opposite to that in which we and France conceive ours to be placed. The separation is not one of words, but of things; not the effect of caprice or of will, but produced by the force of occurrences. The three and the two think differently, and therefore they act differently, whether it be as to Belgium or Portugal or Spain.

This separation cannot really cease till all the questions to which it applies are decided—just as it is impossible to make a coalition ministry while there are questions pending in which public men disagree. But when Ancillon and Metternich complain of this division of Europe into two camps, that which they really complain of is, not the existence of two camps, but the equality of the two camps. The plain English of it is that they want to have England on their side against France, that they may dictate to France, as they did in 1814 and 1815; and they are provoked beyond measure at the steady protection which France has derived from us. But it is that protection which has preserved

[1] The Prussian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

the peace of Europe. Without it there would long ago have been a general war.

To avoid an expression of Lord Palmerston's indignation, the Austrian Ambassador was directed to communicate the intelligence of the occupation of Cracow to the Prime Minister; but it need hardly be said that Lord Melbourne would not be a party to any negotiations behind Lord Palmerston's back.

Lord Melbourne to Baron Hummelauer. South Street, May 29, 1836.

I FEEL much concerned that the indisposition under which I have been suffering has for so long a time prevented me from replying to your letters of the 19th and 21st inst. with their respective enclosures. My uneasiness, however, is much mitigated by the confident expectation which I entertain that both the Prince Chancellor and yourself will feel satisfied that nothing but necessity would have compelled me to delay paying to any communications of his Highness, and more particularly to communications of such importance, the most prompt, immediate, and respectful attention.

With respect to your letter of the 19th and the copies of the despatches which it encloses, as they have been in the usual and established course of business communicated to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I have only to assure your Excellency that I shall be most happy to converse upon the contents of those documents at any time which may suit your Excellency's convenience.

With respect to the two despatches contained in your letter of the 21st, it appears that a different course has been prescribed to its Minister by the Austrian Cabinet, and that you have been directed to lay these representations in the first instance before me as the first Minister of the Crown, without communicating them to that Minister to whose department the affairs of

which they treat especially belong. It is repeated in your letters that this communication is made to me personally, and in consequence of the confidence which the Prince Chancellor is pleased to do me the honour of reposing in me. In the situation which I have the honour to fill I cannot receive a personal communication from a foreign government on a public matter; I could only consider such communication as made to me in my capacity of first Minister of the Crown, and in that capacity I should deem it my duty to make it known to the King and to my colleagues. The forms of the English government have marked out the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as the Minister to whom all correspondence from foreign powers ought to be addressed; and I need not recall to the recollection of an individual of your practice in affairs, still less to the recollection of those eminent and experienced persons under whom you act, the great and harmful inconveniences which are certain to be produced by an unnecessary departure from long-established usages and forms. I feel a still further difficulty on the present occasion because, whilst on the one hand I could not withhold these documents from the knowledge of my colleagues, there are on the other expressions, both in your letters and those of the Prince Chancellor, which seem to imply that it was not his intention that they should be so communicated.

Assuring you, then, of my willingness and anxiety to converse with you upon all public questions, and to afford to your Government upon all matters which interest it as full explanations as are not incompatible with the honour and dignity of the Crown of Great Britain, I think the best course which I can pursue upon the present occasion is, with these observations,

to replace respectfully in your hands the two despatches enclosed in your letter of the 21st inst., leaving it to your judgment to take such further steps with regard to them as you may think most conformable to the intentions of your Government.

Meanwhile the situation in the East was critical. Mehemet Ali, who had only been prevented by Russian intervention from attacking Constantinople in 1833, was again menacing the Porte, and the dissolution of the Turkish Empire seemed imminent. Sir Frederick Lamb was therefore directed by the Government to sound the Duke of Wellington on the measures necessary to be taken for the prevention of hostilities. In an able manner he discussed the questions at issue.

(1) Was any treaty for the defence of the Porte advisable?

(2) Should the attempt to frame one be made in the first instance by the five powers, or be confined to England and France?

The second question could not be answered without reference to the further consideration whether, in case the attempt to form a general treaty should fail, we should stand better with a separate treaty with France, or as we were.

The Duke's reply, which gives us the whole Eastern question in a nutshell, is written in his fine bold hand, without a single erasure and hardly a single additional word:—

The Duke of Wellington to Sir Frederick Lamb. Private. Strathfieldsaye, March 6, 1836.

I RECEIVED yesterday your letter of the 4th, and was much flattered by Lord Melbourne's confidence. He does me justice in believing that I am quite ready to assist the Government of the country whenever it may be deemed to be in my power. I am aware that nobody can pretend to act entirely alone; and I doubted whether I should open your paper, and in fact did not open it till this morning. But I felt that it was expected that I might think proper not to give an opinion when I should consider the question; and that in that case I was at liberty to return the paper. I therefore considered it

most consistent with my views and practice to peruse what you had sent me; and I am happy to be able to return you an immediate answer. Of course I shall say nothing upon the subject to anybody at any time.

The treaty proposed is one for the protection of the Ottoman Government against an unprovoked attack, from whatever quarter it might come. It is to be communicated to the Porte, and to Austria [1] with an invitation to accede to it.

I will discuss presently the chance of the accession of Austria. But in respect of the Porte, I am afraid that it would be found that a treaty for its protection must be one of interference in all its concerns. I believe that in general defensive treaties, as they are called, between a strong Power on the one part and a weak Power on the other have been found to be treaties of protection; and that they do and must lead to interference on the part of the strong Power in every act of the government of the weak Power in relation to other Powers. If such interference should not take place the question of peace or war would not be in the hands of the strong Power, the one which would have to incur the greatest risks, and nearly the whole burthen of the charges.

If this view of the inconvenience of attending such a treaty in relation to any of the smaller Powers of Europe is correct, how much more would the same inconvenience be felt in relation to a treaty of protection of the Ottoman Government! Look at the nature of the government, its ordinary acts and operations, its relations with its vassals and tributaries, its treaties

[1] The Duke apparently regarded the governments of Austria and Prussia as identical, and so, indeed, they were during the Metternich *régime*.

with its neighbours, most particularly with its powerful neighbour,[1] and the nature of the stipulations of those treaties, which in fact gave to Russia a right to interfere in nearly every question that comes to be decided by the Ottoman Government, whether with vassals, its tributaries, its Christian subjects, and, I believe I may add, with foreign Powers. It would be impossible to introduce England and France, and the Parliament of England and the Legislature of France, into these questions. The treaty of protection, then, would be of no avail to the Ottoman Porte; or it must lead as certainly to war, as a treaty offensive and defensive with the same Power would. I quite concur in the opinion that the preservation of the Ottoman Government is much more important to this country than it is to France. It is, in truth, essential to so many of our vital interests, and is so well known to be so, that it is a point of honour. For that reason I would much prefer to consider it a British object in the existing state of the world to making it the object of a stipulation with France. It is true that the risk is increased, that the aid of France might not be offered at the time at which it might be most necessary, and that France might oppose our operations. But it is quite certain that France could not prevent it if the Ottoman Porte should desire it, and I would much prefer to incur the risk of the consequences of such a state of things to incurring the greater risks which might result from the proposed treaty.[2]

You must know better than I do what the Austrians would say to the invitation to accede to the

[1] Especially the Treaty of Hunkiar Skelessi (July 8, 1833), by which the Black Sea had been converted into a Russian lake.

[2] France would have liked to oppose our operations in aid of the Porte in 1840, but dared not do so.

treaty.[1] Although I don't think the apprehension of revolutionary movements is so lively in Germany at present as it was some years ago, that of revolutionary policy is as prevalent as ever it was. I think that Prince Metternich would not approve of this proposed alliance of protection. He would not accept the invitation to accede, and would not make the proposition to Prussia. He is not yet so secure in his position in Europe as to be able to take a course which should separate him at once and entirely from the Emperor of Russia.

We must not conceal from ourselves that the treaty of protection of the Porte would be considered, and indeed is in fact, a treaty of offensive alliance against Russia, be its form what it may. Russia is the only Power excepting England and France that can injure the Porte. It is with Russia alone that the Ottoman Government has questions of interest. That government is now under the protection of Russia; and the object of the treaty would be to substitute the protection of England and France for that of Russia. Metternich would see clearly that this substitution could not be made without war; and I think that in a war between the maritime Powers and Russia there can be no doubt that Austria would take the part of the latter.

This view of the case gives an answer to another question discussed in your paper, viz. whether Russia would be disposed to agree to a general guarantee of the Ottoman Power. It is difficult to say in what way Russia would get rid of this proposition, and I am not informed of the detail of affairs at the present moment. But it is certain that Russia has now the control over the Ottoman Government, and that it cannot be supposed that the Emperor will, or that he can, lessen his

[1] Sir Frederick Lamb was now British Minister at Vienna.

hold of it as long as he is not obliged by force to give it up.

The question, then, comes to this: Are these affairs to remain in their existing state? I am afraid that there is no remedy but time; and the steady adherence to a friendly and protecting policy towards the Ottoman Porte by the King's Government. I entertain no doubt that the present or any Viceroy of Egypt must do whatever the British Government may think proper to order. We must not encourage or protect the injustice of the Ottoman Government towards Mahomet Ali or towards any other tributary. But we ought to countenance its just rights and authority, to discountenance their disobedience and opposition, particularly in arms, and above all their relations and intrigues with foreign Powers. By these measures we should re-establish confidence in our intentions at the Porte; and when the period of the expiration of the defensive treaty with Russia will arrive we may hope to prevent its being renewed. The signal of dependence on the one part and protection on the other will thus be removed. Time may put an end to the reality.

In this discussion of these questions I believe I have adverted to all the points of your paper.

It is desirable for every government not to fail in carrying a proposition which it may make to a foreign Power. I cannot doubt that Russia will not, cannot, concede its supremacy at Constantinople, nor agree to any general guarantee. At all events the proposition for such a one ought not to proceed from England or from France, or from an alliance of England and France. I have stated my reason for thinking that the working of such an alliance would be impracticable to produce anything except immediate war. The war would probably

be general. It would involve the whole of Europe; and if by accident the councils of the Ottoman Porte should not see clearly the road to their own independence and salvation by placing themselves under the protection of England and France, it might happen that the result of the treaty and of the war would be to establish more firmly than ever the dependence of the Ottoman Porte upon Russia.

It really appears to me, upon the whole, that the measure proposed is one of great risk, with little prospect of advantage.

I think that the best thing to do with this letter and your papers is to put them under cover to Lord Melbourne. They could not go to my home in London in less than four covers, which might attract more attention than one directed to him.

Lord Melbourne to Sir Frederick Lamb. Downing Street. July 18, 1836.

I JUST learn from the Foreign Office that there is a messenger going this evening to Vienna, and I take the opportunity of writing a line. I was very ill soon after you left London, quite down with fever and loss of appetite; and though I am quite recovered I cannot say I feel myself as I was before. Halford says I am not the same, and altogether I am inclined to be low and weak. The fact is, I want some rest and freedom from anxiety. I shall be very glad of it, but do not see much prospect. I shall be anxious to hear from you how you find the land lying at Vienna, and if you find Metternich there. There appears to me to have been lately a sort of ill-humour about his communications, certainly disproportioned to the occasion, and a tone of haughtiness and imperiousness which, considering the relative relation of the countries, is to a degree ridiculous. He

writes as if he had thirty sail of the line cruising in the Baltic; while the tone of Russia, on the other hand, is in the highest degree moderate and conciliatory. Ancillon also vapours much, and altogether they lay a stress upon this affair of Cracow which appears to me to be disproportionate and unaccountable. If their case is true, it would have been much better if we had had a consul there, who would have given us a true account, and one upon which we should have relied, which we never shall do upon ——'s[1] assertion. The evil of this tone is—and this you may impress upon Metternich—that whilst it does not affect the minister against whom it is levelled, it does very much excite and irritate the King, who attributes it all to Russia, and considers that it is done on her part to put forward the Cabinets of Berlin and Vienna in order to see how much bile will accumulate, while she remains in the background ready to take any advantage that may offer. We all wish for peace, but Metternich should remember that, whatever should be the disposition of other kings, kings of England like war, which they wage in comparative security, and which offers to them nothing but pleasurable excitement, and commands and promotions to give and to make. We understand from Paris that the dismissal of the Reis Effendi has made a very unfavourable impression, according to Thiers, at Vienna. Sebastiani[2] told me before he went that Metternich's humour was entirely owing to the change in his situation at home, and the different degree of power which he now has compared with that which he had before the Emperor's death.

[1] Apparently the words here are 'Mr. A's.'

[2] Sebastiani was French Ambassador to the Court of St. James from 1835 to 1840.

Meanwhile the King continued to be firm about Canada, declining to sanction the alienation of the Crown lands, or the introduction of the elective principle into the Constitution of Lower Canada. However, in the year after the appointment of Lord Gosford as Governor of the Province, popular indignation rose to such a height that Lord Glenelg was compelled to send off a supplementary despatch declaring that the Commissioners had full power to enquire into every subject connected with the colony and its government.[1] The King's consent was, however, not given until after several refusals.

The King to Lord Melbourne. Windsor Castle, June 7, 1836.

THE King having had a long conversation with Lord Glenelg this day on the subject of an *additional despatch* to the Earl of Gosford, to which his Majesty has *refused* his consent, and being informed by Lord Glenelg that it is the intention of Viscount Melbourne to enter on the subject of Canada with the King to-morrow, conceives the moment is now arrived to explain to his confidential servants his *determination* and *fixed* resolution *never* to permit any despatch to be sent to his Majesty's representative in Canada or any other colony holding an allegiance to Great Britain that can for a moment hold out the most distant idea of the King *ever* permitting the question to be entertained by his Majesty's confidential servants of a most remote bearing relative to any change in the manner of the appointment in the King's Councils in the numerous colonies.

His Majesty is persuaded that the maintenance *of this just* prerogative in the hands of the Crown is the

[1] On the appointment of Lord Gosford in 1835, a few days after his speech to Sir Charles Grey, the King said: 'Mind what you are about in Canada. By God, I will never consent to alienate the Crown lands, nor to make the Council elective. Mind me, my Lord, the Cabinet is not my Cabinet; they had better take care, or, by God, I will have them impeached.'—Hobhouse's 'Recollections' in the *Edinburgh Review*, vol. cxxxiii.

safeguard for the preservation of the wise and happy connection between the mother country and the colonies, which it is *both the duty* and the *inclination* of the King to maintain.

His Majesty cannot conclude without remarking that *this* prerogative *thus* exercised by the Crown has *ever* existed since Great Britain has been in possession of colonies, and *never before* has been called in question.

On June 9 Sir H. Taylor writes further :—

His Majesty, indeed, laments the occurrence of any difficulty in consequence of his withholding his sanction, but his objection is not a fanciful or inconsiderate one: it is founded on conviction and on principle which he cannot abandon, and he considers it his duty to concur with those who hold the same opinion in the maintenance of it. He objects on principle, and upon what he considers sound constitutional grounds, to the adoption of the elective principle in the constitution of the legislative councils in colonies, and he is satisfied that he is fulfilling the obligations of his high station by resisting the attempt to introduce what he views as organic changes.

There can be no modification of this question, nor any hope held out of concession which would not produce further pretensions. The end of the question must be consent or refusal, and his Majesty deems himself bound to persist in the latter alternative.

To the remainder of the instruction which has been prepared he does not object, provided that the points which he had struck out be excluded.

The assistance given to the Constitutional cause in Spain against the Carlists, under the Quadruple Treaty of 1834, was hardly effective. Actual intervention was declined both by

France and England, but as a compromise British subjects were allowed to enlist in the Spanish Legion. Underpaid and half-starved, the British contingent did little, and the war dragged on. Its progress was marked by incidents that were a disgrace to civilisation.

Lord Melbourne to the King. South Street, August 26, 1836.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and laments to find that the letter which Viscount Melbourne did himself the honour of addressing to your Majesty yesterday, has made the impression upon your Majesty's mind which your Majesty describes.

Viscount Melbourne, however, consoles himself with the reflection that either some misapprehension has taken place with respect to the meaning and import of that letter, or, which is far more likely, that Viscount Melbourne expressed himself obscurely and imperfectly.

Viscount Melbourne never intended to convey anything resembling indifference upon the violent and sanguinary events which have lately taken place in Spain. Viscount Melbourne deeply laments and greatly condemns them in themselves, and without going back to former times, with respect to which there is much controversy and much well-founded difference of opinion, the recent experience of the year 1830 has taught him what a serious effect revolutions of this character and nature may produce upon the tranquillity of neighbouring nations.

Viscount Melbourne, however, greatly rejoices to collect from the paragraph of your Majesty's letter which conveys that 'it is by no means your Majesty's wish or intention to withdraw your countenance or protection from the Regent of Spain, or her infant charge,' that there exists no difference of opinion

leading to any practical result. Viscount Melbourne had not thought that the proposed note would have the effect of connecting your Majesty with the proceedings and prospects of a revolutionary government, or Viscount Melbourne would never have been a party to submitting it to your Majesty.

Viscount Melbourne has not lost sight of the course pursued by the French Government to which your Majesty has directed Viscount Melbourne's attention. The French Government have suspended for the present the additional measures of co-operation which they were about to adopt, but have not withdrawn any assistance which they had before given; and Viscount Melbourne cannot help observing that your Majesty has hitherto viewed the whole of the policy pursued by the King of France towards Spain with great suspicion and distrust.[1]

With respect to what may hereafter take place in Spain upon the meeting of the Cortes, Viscount Melbourne does not presume to hazard any prediction. Viscount Melbourne does not conceive himself to have stated in his former letter that it was inexpedient that your Majesty's Government should pause and deliberate before they determined to persevere in the course they had previously adopted. On the contrary, this is the course which Viscount Melbourne intended to recommend—to stand where we are, not to be heated with indignation, not to be bewildered with fear, to take a calm view of what has taken place, to wait for the events which are to come, and to form our judgment

[1] In which the King was thoroughly justified. France showed an increasing disposition to sympathise with the Carlists, and in the following year the auxiliary force, which had been garrisoned on the Spanish frontier, was withdrawn.

upon the whole matter dispassionately, with a view to the preservation of peace in Europe, and to the promotion of the interests of Great Britain.

The same to the same. South Street, August 27, 1836.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE sees in the newspapers the account of the dissolution of the French Ministry.[1] This event renders the affairs of Spain still more complicated and difficult.

Viscount Melbourne will only venture to suggest as a general principle that when a nation is in the state of the Spaniards the sudden withdrawing of the countenance of other Powers tends to strengthen the more violent and desperate party, and to increase and exasperate the evils which are taking place. It deprives the nation of hope, and drives it to despair. It is certain that the determination of the foreign ministers to remain at Paris in July 1830—a determination which is mainly to be attributed to Count Pozzo di Borgo[2]—caused a much more moderate course to be adopted than probably would have been otherwise pursued, and, it is reasonable to suppose, saved Europe from a war which might have been either long or short, but which would have been pregnant with hazard and danger.

The King in a long letter, dated November 7, 1836, draws Lord Melbourne's attention to the state of France, and states his apprehensions 'that France may become ere long the theatre of another frightful revolution, in which a large and ill-disposed army would probably take a principal share, of which the object would be the overturn of the existing Monarchy and the support of rival pretensions, either Carlist[3] or Bonapartist, or the establish-

[1] The Duc de Broglie and Guizot retired, and a new Ministry was formed under Thiers.

[2] The witty Corsican, who entered the service of Russia in 1803, and was the leading diplomatist of the Czar until his death, in 1842.

[3] That is, Legitimist.

ment of a Republican form of government or of military despotism, all or either producing a struggle between contending parties, and great disorder.' He did not think that the revolutionary spirit would extend to this country, or even to Ireland, unless it should be 'produced by a foreign war in which this country should be engaged, and promoted by external aid.' But with regard to the foreign policy of England some decision should be taken. The struggle could hardly fail to be European. He thought that an attitude of strict neutrality should be preserved; avoiding an alliance either with Republicanism or Absolutism. He thought that Russia would have to be carefully watched, as she would probably take the opportunity to 'pursue her projects *eastward*, with the hope that the attentions of others would be absorbed in the great continental struggle.'

Lord Melbourne to Sir Herbert Taylor. South Street, November 10, 1836.

UPON my arrival in London late on Monday evening, I found your letter of the 7th instant, written by his Majesty's command, and sanctioned by his Majesty's signature. The principles laid down appear to me to be just, the objects right, and the opinions, as far as opinions can be formed upon future and contingent events, perhaps too likely to be realised. At the same time it must be recollected that in human affairs a fearful storm often appears to be impending and inevitable, and then the clouds on a sudden disperse of themselves, and if they do burst they do so from a quarter and in a direction exactly the reverse of that which had been anticipated. So uncertain, indeed, is the course of human events that it is almost impossible for us to foresee them with an exactness sufficient to enable us to do more than to lay down the most general rules for the direction and guidance of our conduct in the circumstances which may occur.

There certainly appears to be much wild opinion, much disposition to change, much in France that is

hostile to settled and established government; and the various elements of discord and dissension which exist in Europe are well enumerated and weighed in the letter which his Majesty has directed you to write. But I trust that there is reason to hope that the principle of stability is yet stronger than the principle of disturbance, and that the experience of past evils and present benefits will be sufficient to guard us against the repetition of such scenes as clouded and disgraced the termination of the last century.

If the contrary should unfortunately be the case, and Europe should be again convulsed by wars and revolutions, I agree that the policy of England should, if possible, be to preserve her own peace and neutrality; but I own I have little hope that, if contests should arise of any extent or duration, she would be long able to do so. It is not in the nature of things that a great, powerful, and leading country should long be able to hold herself aloof from those contentions in which her neighbours are engaged. It will not be for the honour and interest of the Crown that Great Britain should ally herself either with the spirit of general revolution or of arbitrary government. But neither will it be politic or prudent for her to take exception to any form of government, despotic or republican, which may be established in other countries. These views are, I apprehend, in unison with his Majesty's opinions; they are very general, but it is impossible to lay down more precisely the course to be pursued, which must be determined by circumstances as they arise, and by the events, the tempers, and the feelings with which we may have to deal. His Majesty remembers and understands, and remembers much better than I do, all that led to the commencement of

the French war in 1793. Public opinion was strong in favour of that war. Those whose opinions were against it were listened to with disregard or with impatience. Now public opinion runs as blindly in the opposite direction, and everything done at that time is considered as the height of folly and injustice.

I will take care that the whole of your most important and well-considered letter shall receive the attention which it deserves.

Sir Herbert Taylor to Lord Melbourne. Private. Brighton, November 12, 1836.

I HAVE had the honour to submit to the King your lordship's letter of the 10th instant, and I have received his Majesty's commands to assure you that he has derived great satisfaction from the manner in which you have entered into the general subject of his communication of the 7th instant, and that he has read with equal interest your remarks upon it.

The King agrees with your lordship that the uncertain course of human events precludes the possibility of foreseeing them with an exactness sufficient to enable us to do more than to lay down general rules applicable to the circumstances which may occur; but he conceives that passing events may justify surmises with respect to the general nature of others which may arise out of them, and that the timely consideration of the various contingencies which may arise must produce the advantage of being better prepared for that prompt decision which averts the mischief ever attending delay and hesitation. The course of events may differ essentially from that which has been anticipated and apprehended, but the general state of Europe offers certain features which cannot be mistaken, and which must have a decided influence upon the progress and the results of

any struggle which may arise; and it is with reference to these leading features that his Majesty was anxious to call your attention to the consideration of the principle which should guide the conduct of his government, although he admits that circumstances may occur which could render impossible the strict or continued adherence to any rule laid down for the direction and guidance of its proceedings. The King sincerely hopes that your lordship's opinion, that the principle of stability is yet stronger than the inclination to disturbance, may prove well-founded; but he cannot help observing that the experience of past evils has not preserved Spain and Portugal from the repeated renewal of disorder, and that there have been many indications in France and in Italy of a disposition which little accords with the just appreciation of present benefits and of the blessings of peace. The King decidedly concurs in your sentiments that while it will not be for the interests or honour of the Crown that Great Britain should ally herself either with the spirit of general revolution or of arbitrary government, it will be neither politic nor prudent for her to take exception to any form of government, despotic or republican, which may be established in other countries.

His Majesty agrees with you in the distinction which you have drawn between the character and tendency of public opinion in this country in 1793 and that which seems to prevail at present, though he believes it would now under any circumstances be in its effect passive rather than active.

The same to the same. Private.

I HAVE the honour to receive and to submit to the King your lordship's letter of the 31st ult.; and his Majesty has ordered me to express the

Brighton, January 2, 1837. satisfaction with which he has read it, and to assure you of his cordial and unqualified assent to the opinions which it conveys on the views, the interests, and the policy of this country in its relations with foreign states.

The King is persuaded, as you are, that jealousy of the property and grandeur of this country is the dominant feeling of France, and of every state on the Continent; he considers it to have been shown at all times, and on every occasion to have been ill-concealed by those which needed our assistance for their preservation, and when it was essential to them that we should possess the means of affording effectual aid, and that it was betrayed beyond the power of doubt so soon as that necessity had been removed. Without seeking for more remote instances, his Majesty would refer to the conduct of Portugal, or even of Spain, upon every question in which British interests become the objects of consideration. His Majesty admits that experience in such a feeling on their part is not calculated to encourage or justify predilections towards them, and that we should therefore be guided in our own proceedings with respect to them by circumstances and by consideration of what is best suited to our interests; always, however, bearing in mind that, in transactions between states as between individuals, 'honesty is the best policy.'

The difference in such transactions is that individuals may, in the exercise of indulgence and liberality, assume a latitude which would be inadmissible on the part of governments, inasmuch as the leading principle of the policy of any country must be strict attention to its own interests.

The King agrees with your lordship in considering Louis Philippe sincere in his determination to avoid

interference, and he believes him to be guided in this respect by the conviction that intervention upon a large scale (and it might not be easy to calculate its eventual extent) would expose him to great inconvenience and danger, and therefore to be influenced by a consideration of what is best suited to his own interests.

The only circumstance which might, in his Majesty's opinion, produce a change in this determination would be such a state of things in Spain as might offer a plausible plan for the occupation of some province, Catalonia for instance.

Although, therefore, his Majesty has ever felt desirous that France should give greater efficacy to the stipulations of the Quadruple Treaty, he has not ceased to condemn the earnestness with which Mr. Villiers[1] has pressed for intervention, without reference to any other than local contingencies and the circumstances of the moment, and he has often remarked to Lord Palmerston that Mr. Villiers' zeal has outrun his discretion. He appears to his Majesty to have been equally unfortunate in his estimates of the character of those who have been successively placed at the head of the Queen of Spain's councils, each having in turn been the object of his confidence and admiration, and of his mistrust and severe reprobation; and this applies particularly to Mr. Mendizabal.[2]

His Majesty is not surprised that Louis Philippe should be unwilling to commit himself further with governments so incapable, so inefficient, so little consistent in principle, and almost invariably so ill-served

[1] Afterwards Lord Clarendon, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. His correspondence as quoted by Greville (especially iii. 321, 360, 365) hardly bears out the King's impression.

[2] Mendizabal, a Jew who had made his fortune in London, became Prime Minister of Spain in 1835 (Bulwer's *Palmerston*, ii. 222-234).

as those which have figured in Spain, and he considers that nothing but the conviction of the prejudice which our interests would suffer from the success of Don Carlos could have justified the extent of the support we have given to a government so constituted and so administered.

His Majesty rejoices to learn from Lord Granville's[1] despatches that there is no probability of the French Government guaranteeing a loan on the security of Cuba, as anything producing the most indirect claim on the part of France on that Spanish colony might pave the way for ulterior designs, and involve this country in a contest.

Nor, indeed, does a loan appear to offer to France, even with that security, the same advantage as to England, which would derive from it the only chance of ever recovering the value of the arms and other supplies furnished to the Spaniards during the present contest.

The same to the same. Brighton. January 5, 1837.

I HAVE submitted to the King your lordship's letter of yesterday, and the letter of Prince Metternich to Esterhazy, which I beg to return. His Majesty agrees with you in pronouncing it, like all his papers, oracular and obscure. He always writes as if he meant to keep a loop-hole and to reserve to himself the facility of contesting the assumed interpretation of what he has said, if a change of circumstances or of views should raise the question.

He admits an identity of interest between Austria and England on Eastern questions, and, this being self-evident and generally acknowledged, he asks how happens it that England has taken a course so opposed

[1] British Minister at Paris.

to that principle. But he applies this question to no particular period. The 'divergence' occurred in 1828–1829, during the administration of Mr. Canning, and may be ascribed to a *classical* predilection for the independence of Greece which equally engaged the romantic feelings of France, while Russia took advantage of it to pursue, with the aid of both, her designs to reduce the power and resources of the Porte.

Since that period we have professed to check the supposed views of Russia, or rather we have professed our wish to do so; and in the bickerings which have taken place (for they cannot be said to have amounted to more), the court of Vienna, or at least its representative at Constantinople, has sided with Russia rather than with us. Recently the policy of Austria may have again become somewhat anti-Russian in consequence of the jealousy to which the increasing trade by the Danube and Black Sea may give occasion, and it remains to be seen how far the identity of *commercial* interests may prevail in re-establishing the political union.

Prince Metternich claims great credit for Austria in not having interfered in the questions and contests which have arisen in Spain and Portugal; but it may be observed that he could not have done so, on the principle he maintains, which is opposed to that adopted by England and France, without engaging in a general contest.[1] His Highness lays great stress upon the incorrectness and the danger of allowing the order of succession in Spain to be changed by the will of Ferdinand VII., but he overlooks the fact that this was not the first change in that order of succession, and that Ferdinand VII. had a choice of precedents since the Treaty

[1] Metternich's *Memoirs* proved that if he had dared he would have intervened in Spanish affairs in favour of Don Carlos.

of Utrecht, without going back to the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, or to the more remote periods of the history of Spain when the Salic and the anti-Salic law variously prevailed. I apprehend, therefore, that it was open to the British Government to admit or to reject the validity of the testament of Ferdinand VII., according to its view and conviction of the leaning and inclination of the great mass of the Spanish people, and its very natural desire to take the course most calculated to secure the tranquillity of the Peninsula and therefore also best suited to the interests of the country; and certainly the state of things in Spain at the period of the promulgation of the testament fully justifies the course taken.

But Prince Metternich and his friends of the Holy Alliance may perhaps be disposed to ascribe the course pursued to a predilection for the introduction and establishment of constitutional government, and to argue that if the government of the country had been Tory when the case occurred the right of Don Carlos would have been preferred to that of his infant niece.

To Lord Melbourne. Windsor Castle, May 19, 1837.

THE King has received Viscount Melbourne's letter of yesterday's date on the subject of the proposed renewal of the Order in Council, which suspends the operation of the Foreign Enlistment Act with respect to those of his Majesty's subjects who may enter into the service of the Queen of Spain, and his Majesty has given due consideration to all that is urged therein in support of the advice tendered to him by his confidential servants, as he had already given to what had been submitted to him verbally by Viscount Melbourne and Viscount Palmerston. The King is unwilling to embarrass his government by

persisting in his opposition to a measure upon which they lay so much stress, and to which they appear to attach an almost paramount importance, as its adoption or rejection may affect either the character and the consistency of his government, or the general course and influence of its foreign policy; but though his Majesty may yield to this consideration, he cannot say that any remarks made or arguments produced have succeeded in removing the objections which he had stated, and which he continues to feel, to the renewal of the Order in Council, or to perseverance in the course which experience has shown to be unavailing and to have been productive of disappointment and ridicule, and of a share in that disgrace which has attended the proceedings of the Queen of Spain's government under successive administrations.

The King has to observe that the period of suspension of the Foreign Enlistment Act was limited by the Order in Council issued in 1835, and that he cannot admit any breach of compact, or any retrogression from engagements entered into, to be imputable to this country for not renewing the Act, or for not extending the period of an experiment which has tended so little to the satisfaction and credit of the country, and so little to the advantage or profit of the Queen of Spain's cause, while it has offered ample proof of the inability or the unwillingness of the Spanish Government to perform its engagements towards those of his Majesty's subjects who have entered the service of the Queen of Spain, and to do common justice to their claims. There would, in the King's opinion, be sufficient reasons for not complying with the application recently made by the Spanish Government, and no other justification could be required; but his Majesty does not deny that he contem-

plates with concern and impatience the manner in which the honour and the credit of this country are committed by the services and the proceedings of a band of mercenaries whom it is impossible to divest of the denomination and character of British subjects and British soldiers, while their conduct has been in many respects disreputable and unworthy of that name and character.

Viscount Melbourne has observed that the measure of which the revival is now proposed met, in the first instance, with his Majesty's sanction and approbation. He does not deny this; but his objections to the manner in which it was carried into effect, and to the choice of the individual entrusted with its direction, were early stated; and the results have confirmed them. His reluctance to continue or to revive that sanction arises, therefore, from the failure of the measure to which he had consented, and not from any indisposition to promote anything from which he may expect advantage or credit to be derived. It applies to the existence of a proved evil.

Having thus, in justice to himself, recorded his feelings upon this subject, the King acquaints Viscount Melbourne that he consents to the renewal of the Order in Council for one year, but with the understanding that the recruiting for the service of the Queen of Spain should be limited to Ireland, and that those enlisted may be, as far as possible, of the Roman Catholic persuasion, it being obvious that recruits professing that faith are much better suited to the service of the Queen of Spain, and to the country in which they are to serve, than Protestants.[1]

[1] The King withdrew this condition on the 21st, in answer to Lord Melbourne's objections.

CHAPTER XI

HOME AFFAIRS

1837–1841

THE accession of Queen Victoria greatly strengthened the position of the Ministry. Had William IV. lived much longer it may be doubted if the Whigs could have continued to conduct affairs in the face of the royal displeasure and the mischievous action of the Tory majority in the House of Lords. It is true that the general election did not result in any material alteration of the balance of parties; but it confirmed the Ministry in power, and showed that the nation was willing to regard the Liberal Ministry as fit guardians of the youthful sovereign. Hence the Opposition was, for a while, less assiduous in its attacks. To Lord Melbourne the change can hardly have been otherwise than most welcome. He certainly spoke from his heart when he described William IV. as 'a being of the most uncompromising and firmest honour that ever it pleased Divine Providence to place upon the throne.' But he was now given an occupation than which, as Greville rightly remarks, 'none was ever more engrossing or involved greater responsibility,' and Greville rightly emphasises the romantic side of the relationship when he says: 'I have no doubt he is passionately fond of her, as he might be of his daughter if he had one, and the more because he is a man with a capacity for loving without having anything in the world to love.' It can hardly be doubted that if the account of Lord Melbourne's stewardship were to be laid before the world it would abundantly confirm the praise bestowed upon him by all his contemporaries for the manner in which he played his great part. But the time for such a publication has not come; nor, to tell the truth, are the materials to be found among Lord Melbourne's papers, with the exception of the letter

given below. It only remains to quote once more the Duke of Wellington's testimony, which struck foreign observers as being so admirably illustrative of the honour which prevails in English public life[1]: 'I am willing to admit that the noble Viscount has rendered the greatest possible service to her Majesty. I happen to know that it is her Majesty's opinion that the noble Viscount has rendered her Majesty the greatest possible service, making her acquainted with the mode and policy of the government of this country, initiating her into the laws and spirit of the constitution, independently of the performance of his duty as the servant of her Majesty's Crown teaching her, in short, to preside over the destinies of this great country.'

To the Queen. South Street, June 23, 1837.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and has the honour of submitting the letter which he has this morning received from Lord Lansdowne. Viscount Melbourne, having obtained this answer on the part of Lady Lansdowne, has now written to the Duchess of Sutherland, and will lose no time in laying before your Majesty her Grace's answer when he shall receive it.[2]

Lord Melbourne has also seen Captain Spencer,[3] who has this morning returned from Althorp, and Lord Melbourne is sorry to be obliged to add that he is unwilling to accept the office which has been offered to him. With the utmost duty and attachment to your Majesty Captain Spencer conceives that the duties are very foreign from any in which he has ever been engaged and he is reluctant to undertake them from a feeling of his incompetence to discharge them. Lord Melbourne combated these opinions, and tried to reason Captain Spencer out of them, but in vain.

[1] For instance, the German historian Von Raumer (*England in 1841*, ii. 113). The Duke's speech was made on the resignation of the Whigs, August 24, 1841.

[2] The Duchess of Sutherland became Mistress of the Robes.

[3] Lord Spencer's brother, and the father of the present Earl.

Lord Melbourne trusts that your Majesty will not feel either surprised or discouraged at the difficulties which occur in making the arrangement, and which Lord Melbourne's experience enables him to assure your Majesty always do occur in transactions of this nature. The persons who are the best fitted for offices are often the most unwilling to undertake them, and those who are least qualified, most eager to obtain them.

The appointment of your Majesty's Treasurer, and of your ladies, is the most pressing, and Viscount Melbourne would earnestly recommend a serious and mature consideration before the other parts of the household are finally determined upon.

It will be convenient to your Majesty if your Majesty will return any letters in the boxes in which they are sent, as your Majesty will be much incommoded by charging yourself with the custody of them.

The events of the remainder of the year do not call for any particular remark as far as home affairs are concerned. The following letters are, perhaps, worth printing, as they show that Lord Melbourne was able to hold his own with so formidable a controversialist as Bishop Phillpotts.

Lord Melbourne to the Bishop of Exeter. Downing Street, November 30, 1837.

. . . I HAVE this morning had the honour of receiving your lordship's letter, to which I hasten to reply. It certainly was your lordship to whom I alluded in the debate on Monday night in the House of Lords. Indeed, I stated that I adverted to a charge delivered by a reverend prelate to the clergy of the diocese of Exeter, which could, of course, only be understood to designate your Lordship. I did also affirm that no one of the numerous and distinguished individuals who had animadverted upon the expressions which I had employed in moving

the Irish Tithe Bill in the year 1835[1] had read the whole of the paragraph or had given me the benefit of the modifications and qualifications with which I had guarded my propositions. This, I said, and still say, was unfair; but I deny that the charge of unfairness either necessarily does, or was, intended upon the present occasion to imply a charge of dishonesty. Persons may very easily be led to be unfair, and very frequently are so, by motives and impulses—not of a dishonest character—by haste, by thoughtlessness, by inadvertence, by prejudice, by passion.

It is possible that what I said may appear in the report more bitter than it really was in the utterance. This is not unfrequently the case, and *vice versâ*. I did not previously intend to have mentioned this subject, and was only led to do so by Lord Roden's producing in his speech these much-cited phrases. All I said was that when so much stress was laid upon particular expressions, and such serious conclusions were drawn from them, fairness required that the whole passage in which they were employed should be quoted. I was perfectly aware that your lordship had left the House, and if I had intended a charge of a serious nature I should not have brought it forward in your lordship's absence. . .

The same to the same. Downing Street, December 7, 1837.

I HAVE received your lordship's letter of the 2nd inst., which opens a wider field of argument and dispute than it is my intention to enter upon. The single question between us is whether upon the occasion of your charge to your clergy your lordship ought not to have stated to them the whole passage upon which you commented,

[1] The expression was: 'a heavy blow and discouragement to Protestantism.'

and from which you drew such important conclusions. I thought that you ought; and, having read your lordship's letter, I remain of the same opinion. Whether such a statement would have assisted your lordship's argument or mine, it is not for either of us to decide. In order to enable others to do so it should have been made.

Lest my silence should be construed into an admission, I deny any compact having been to my knowledge entered into at Litchfield House or anywhere else, and that I disclaim having been a party to any such compact.

With respect to the other passage, which your lordship cites, I allow that it is very inaccurately worded, and liable to the interpretation which your lordship puts upon it.[1] The precisely opposite course to the eradication of the Roman Catholic and the substitution of the Protestant faith is evidently the eradication of the Protestant and the substitution of the Roman Catholic faith. But I am certain that your lordship cannot think that such was my real meaning then or at any other time, although it may be drawn from the words which I employed. What I intended to affirm was that it was necessary to adopt towards the Roman Catholics measures precisely opposite to those which had been adopted in the times to which I referred; but I can hardly be suspected of having meant that the arms of discouragement and persecution should now be turned against the Protestants.

In December, the Speaker wished to resign, because he had

[1] 'If you abandon our policy as you have done, you must abandon it entirely, and you must adopt not only a different but precisely the opposite course.' The Bishop of Exeter is generally mentioned in Lord Melbourne's correspondence simply as 'the Bishop,' just as Wellington would be called 'the Duke.'

not received sufficient support from Lord John Russell; but he was induced to reconsider his determination.

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Abercromby. South Street, December 27, 1837.

I HAVE received your letter, and thank you very much for it. I have, of course, shown it to Lord John Russell, who takes such a very different view of the facts stated in it, that I conceive that there must be a good deal of misconception on both sides, which would probably be removed by explanation. I do not possess the means of forming any judgment, and if I did I am too much interested in the result to be a fair and impartial judge. My anxiety is that the Government, if it is to fall, should fall in the open light, and not be dissolved by embarrassments arising within itself in a manner unintelligible and unsatisfactory to the great body of its supporters. In spite both of Tories and Radicals, I believe there is a very large number of persons in the country who advocate the continuance of the present Government, and I think we owe it to them to fight the battle with as much courage and as much discretion as we can command.

The Radical section of the Liberal party was meantime in almost open mutiny; indeed, on July 9, 1837, Mr. Roebuck had moved for a Committee of the whole House on the state of the nation. Nevertheless, Lord Melbourne's nominal supporters did not like being criticised in turn, and some remarks of his led to a friendly remonstrance from his neighbour Sir E. L. Bulwer, whose Liberalism, however, was already on the wane.

Lord Melbourne to Sir E. L. Bulwer. South Street, March 20, 1838.

I AM very much obliged to you for your letter. Whenever any offence is taken, or any misunderstanding arises, it is far the best course to ask at once for an explanation. I cannot charge my memory with the recollection of the

exact terms which I employed. I should think that those which you have cited[1] are not precisely accurate, but probably nearly so. I perceive now, what is not so easy to perceive at the moment, that they were very imprudent, much too general, and from their generality very unjust. I think I cannot be considered by anyone who considers the matter fairly and calmly to have intended to apply my observations to any gentleman who has supported the Government. I meant only to designate those in Parliament who have voted with Sir William Molesworth,[2] or those out of Parliament who prefer a Tory to a ministerial candidate, such as those electors of Marylebone who voted for Lord Teignmouth. To any other my remark is inapplicable, but I feel that I ought to have marked this distinction, and that my not having done so is liable to the interpretation which has been put upon it.

You may show this to anyone to whom it will, in your opinion, give any satisfaction, but I should not wish it to get into the newspapers.

You will observe that Lord Winchilsea used the term 'Radicals,' which is one I should never introduce myself; and that what I said was said in jest, and by no means bore in the delivery that serious character which it assumes in the report.

The legislation of 1838 was important. The Lords, it is

[1] 'The noble lord had said that this was a boon to the Radicals. If so it was a boon without any consideration. Her Majesty's Government received nothing in return for it—a boon more objectionable now, more inopportune, and less justified by prudence or sound policy than at any time he (Lord Melbourne) remembered since the formation of the present Government.'

[2] The disfavour with which this strenuous politician was then regarded by the Whigs appears on the whole to have been somewhat unjust. Still he had recently expressed a hope that the Canadian rebels might be victorious.

true, mutilated the Irish Corporation Bill, and it was abandoned in accordance with the wishes of the Irish members. But the Irish Poor Law Bill was passed in spite of O'Connell's denunciation of the measure, and the tithe question was settled at last, minus the Appropriation clauses, which, if Lord Melbourne had had his way, would never have been introduced into the Bill. It was in connection with the last measure that Lord Melbourne received the following letter from O'Connell. One can well believe that it was unanswered, as it is well known that the Prime Minister never held any personal communication with the great agitator, either by word of mouth or by letter.

16 Pall Mall, May 10, 1838.

If I could take the liberty of marking this letter 'Private' I should do so, simply because I write without the avowed sanction of any other Irish member. I, however, have so extensive and so intimate a knowledge of the wishes and the opinions of the Irish people, that I can venture without hesitation to pledge myself to this—that even should the House of Commons reject Lord John Russell's resolutions, it would be desired, and indeed expected, that the present ministry should not consider that defeat final as to their power, so as to deprive Ireland of the practical and most useful protection that country enjoys by the impartial administration of the existing laws.

I hope you, my lord, will not deem me presumptuous in the necessary suggestion which this statement of fact implies. I believe that the highest proof a British statesman can give of political sagacity is the determination to take every step in his power to make Ireland an efficient and useful portion of the empire, by conciliating her people to the British rule. Few know how deep has been and still is the conviction of the Irish people that the dominion of England works only for mischief. Your ministry is the first to lessen that conviction, and it only requires time and a per-

severance in the present course to obliterate it for ever.

This letter requires no reply. It is even better that it should be unanswered.

But I feel it a duty to claim for Ireland from the present administration the sacrifice of some proud feelings, if that be necessary in order to continue their protection to Ireland.

Lord Mulgrave to Lord Melbourne. Private. July 3, 1838.

As I do not hear from any of you, and as, in consequence of the unexampled tranquillity of this country, and the confiding expectation of the people, I am less exclusively absorbed with the execution of business here than I was at first, I am left to speculate at random upon what will be the result of the crisis.

You mentioned in one of your letters that you might yourselves be obliged possibly to take some course which would bring on a repetition of the *coup d'état* of November 1834; but I apprehend from what has happened since that that could not be in connection with the Irish Corporation question, because the peers, with their temporary obstinacy, have made it almost ludicrously obvious that they mean to give in next session. The tendency on the tithe question is not so evident, and there are many circumstances which make it of a very complicated character. There is no doubt that the stringent forms of the Exchequer have disgusted all who have property to lose with serious resistance; and that the general tranquillity which now prevails, I really believe, upon the idea which has been inculcated, that it is the best mode of supporting the government, is at the same time so far an advantage to the clergy that there is now no combination amongst

the peasantry. Those swaggering commissioners of rebellion now wander up and down the country, and, undisturbed, search for victims who would, under any other circumstances, have all been stoned in the first week's campaign. I have not heard lately what is doing about the appeal in the House of Lords against the decision of the barons with regard to the constabulary; but as long as I am allowed to use the instructions I have at present upon the employment of the force upon that service, I do not contemplate so much evil on that point from the tithe question being left unsettled as from the grievous manner in which the accumulating costs of some of the other processes will act upon many.

I fear, of course, that question will again be left unsettled, and am not altogether easy about the consequences, though I believe you will find all the Liberal leaders here preaching patience to the people and confidence in the Government till another session. But there still remains the equally difficult problem, how and when are the Lords to be brought to reason? I quite gather that your present intention is not to have a dissolution in the interim, so that things will remain in much the same state when you meet again. To render dissolution desirable you must, of course, have satisfactory reasons for it and good results from it. In Ireland I could assure you that you would have both a better sort of supporters and more of them, and here, perhaps, more than in England. The difference would tell between an election with a friendly or hostile government. For instance, the inclinations of most of the employers would be to exert their influence against the popular cause, which they would not venture to do whilst I was here.

On the whole, Lord Melbourne seems to have been satisfied with the state of affairs. 'Equality of parties,' he wrote to Lord John on August 22, 'makes government doubtful and difficult, but it cannot be helped; it is a contingency which may happen, and which has happened.' And about this time he sent the following answer to Bulwer, who asked for assistance in writing an article for the 'Edinburgh Review.'

Clerks in public offices are not given to extraordinary and gratuitous exertion unless they be of a speculative, philosophical, poetical, or literary character, and then they generally neglect their ordinary business. What you want done a clerk is no more able to do than another man; a clerk knows but little of the measures that are introduced by the head of his office, and he has but little to do with them except to carry them out.

I am sure if the ministers are chargeable with inefficiency, inefficiency must be in the nature of the measures, and not in their number and importance. More, or as much, has been done in the last nine years of change than from the Restoration to 1830. Whether all has been quite wise is another matter.

You are of course aware and remember that a pamphlet was published at the end of the session of 1833 commemorating all the Acts which had passed in that most laborious session, when many questions of the greatest magnitude were settled and decided upon. You are fully in possession of the work. In the session of 1834 we passed the English Poor-Law, and pretty well for one session, considering the effect it has had and the row it has made. In 1835 the English Municipal Bill—pretty well too. In 1837 the Irish Tithe Bill and the Irish Poor-Law,[1] the effects of which latter are yet to be seen, but which hitherto promises well.

[1] Introduced in 1837, but passed in the following year.

I will try if I can get anything done for you, particularly upon the finance and taxation.

Here are Lord Melbourne's opinions on the slave trade, which, after all, are those of common sense. They are probably more serious than his dictum which so shocked Archbishop Whately, that the abolition of slavery was great folly.[1]

To Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, September 3, 1838.

I NEVER meant that any offer of Canada should be made, but that we should consider a little in our own minds what is to be done in the case supposed. I send you a letter which I have received from Hobhouse. He may be right about the men. He is not right about the case. I do not much like the notion of W. H.[2] He has always appeared to me a particularly silly fellow; I have never heard how he has done in Ceylon. I apprehend it to be a very easy post.

Buxton[3] has of course sent you his book. Pray read it without delay. It recommends measures to be taken instantly, and it will form the manual of the saints and dissenters during the next session. I hope he exaggerates the extent of the slave trade carried on at present, and I should think it probable that he does so, as his object is to prove that nothing yet has been effected towards its abolition. But it is impossible not to feel, and to expect that religion, morality, law, eloquence, cruisers, will all be ineffectual, when opposed to a profit

[1] See Archbishop Whately's 'Table Talk' in his *Life and Correspondence* (p. 467): 'I say, Archbishop, what do you think I'd have done about this slavery business if I'd had my own way? I'd have done nothing at all! I'd have left it all alone. It's all a pack of nonsense! Always have been slaves in the most civilised countries; the Greeks and Romans had slaves; however, they *would* have their fancy, and so we've abolished slavery; but it's great folly.'

[2] Mr. Wilmot Horton, the late Governor of Ceylon.

[3] Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, the celebrated philanthropist. The book was *The Slave Trade and its Remedy.*

of cent. per cent. and more. While a slave can be purchased in Africa for a few beads, a yard or two of red cloth, a bad gun, and sold elsewhere for a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds, it will not be very easy to prevent his being bought and sold. But the remedy proposed by Buxton, namely, the establishing posts in the interior of Africa, and undertaking the cost of civilising that continent, requires to be seriously thought of before it is adopted. The obstacles and objections are numerous and obvious. (1) The expense and the wars and contests in which it would engage us. Our posts must be supported and protected. (2) The loss of human life. Whatever Buxton may say, the white man has hitherto been unable to exist in those countries, and a much larger proportion die than live. (3) The jealousy and hostility of all Africa, Mahometan and idolatrous, already much alarmed and incensed by the French occupation of Algiers. (4) The jealousy of all the other nations of the world, who will no more believe that we go there principally for the purpose of suppressing the slave-trade than we should believe it of Russia if she were to allege such a motive for the establishing of posts and stations in countries which do not belong to her.

. . .

During the early autumn Lord Melbourne was satisfied with the condition of Ireland. 'What gives you uneasiness about Ireland?' he wrote to Lord John Russell on September 5. 'How unreasonable you are! I never thought that their crimes and outrages had much to do with former misgovernment and present politics. I believe them to arise from a natural disposition of the people, and a natural state of society which would have been much the same under any dispensation.' This letter, curiously enough, was written after the news had been received that O'Connell had started a new organ of agitation under the title of the 'Precursor Association.' [1]

[1] That is, 'the forerunner of Repeal.' O'Connell's names for his

August 25, 1838. I HAVE a letter from Mulgrave, annoyed and surprised at O'Connell's 'Precursor Association.' He thought he had an assurance from him through Piggot that, though he would recommend agitation generally, he would do nothing of this kind. It certainly adds to our difficulties. At least, I have always felt that all such proceedings did so.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. September 26, 1838. I HAVE received yours of the 23rd here this morning. I think with you that it is probable that O'Connell's immediate object is to maintain his own influence with the Irish people, and to prevent others from obtaining power and weight amongst them. Other leaders might say, 'Pay us the rent which you now pay to Dan.' But it has always been my opinion that he has larger and ulterior objects floating before his mind, and that he always keeps himself in a situation to take advantage of any crisis that may arrive. . . .

Under the circumstances Lord Normanby wished to resign.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. November 29, 1838. I SEND you a letter which I received from Normanby yesterday. Perhaps he has written to you to the same effect. This letter, together with the Precursor Society and the general state of Ireland, made it appear to all the Cabinet yesterday that it would be most inexpedient to change the government of Ireland at the present moment. Such a change would give O'Connell an additional pretext for a rupture, and to many others a ground for joining him, which they could not do whilst Normanby remained. I thought, therefore, I had better write to Normanby to that effect, and also sound him as to whether he would object to

organisations were seldom happy, and this one naturally became known as 'The Cursers.'

the introduction of Morpeth into the Cabinet during the rest of his government.

In spite of the troubles of the autumn Lord Melbourne found time to read 'Wilberforce's Life,' which had recently been published. Here are his impressions, as they appear at the end of a letter to Lord John Russell about the siege of Herat.

Windsor Castle, October 1838.

I HAVE been reading Wilberforce: most amusing, most interesting, a most curious picture both of himself and the times; and much peeps out about Pitt which was not known before. It is a pity there is not more: a thousand pities that more particulars are not given of the conversations which he had with him. I have read the recent journals—Windham's, Dudley's, Wilberforce's; all three of them full of nothing but discontent and dissatisfaction with themselves.[1] Windham and Dudley because they did not apply enough and exert and distinguish themselves sufficiently; in addition, Dudley was always doubting whether he made the most of his position and his fortune, and amused himself in the best way. Wilberforce, perpetually vexing himself because he amused himself too much and too well and had not religion enough. Romilly's account of himself the only one that has any sober quiet in it, and yet I doubt whether he was in reality the happiest and most contented of the four.[2] The worst of beginning such a book is that it materially interferes with one's attending to anything else. One good thing, by the way, is that it shows the great philanthropist, Thomas Clarkson, to be a sad fellow.[3]

[1] This is certainly true of Mr. Windham's *Diary*, published in 1866. Lord Dudley's *Journal* has never been published, and is said to have been destroyed.

[2] He was unhappy enough at the last to commit suicide. His *Life*, written by himself and edited by his sons, was published in 1840, so that Lord Melbourne must have seen it in manuscript.

[3] The allusion is to Clarkson's failure to do justice to his associates in

It was clear that, if the Government was to go on, the Ministry must be reconstructed, and the illness of Sir John Newport, the Comptroller of the Exchequer, appeared to afford an opportunity for effecting the transformation.

Lord Duncannon to Lord Melbourne. Private. October 20, 1838.

THERE is nothing more disagreeable and ungracious than having to comment on one's friends and colleagues, but you wish for some remarks on John Russell's paper. I think there is a strong feeling for a change in the Colonial Office, which Glenelg has brought upon himself a good deal by the manner in which he conducts his business. I think the Comptrollership of the Exchequer being available gives the opportunity for a change there, and as it is a most important situation it is one that he might accept without discredit, and for which he is peculiarly fitted by his character, firmness, and integrity.

There is no doubt that the removal of Rice from the Exchequer would be popular. The constant canvass for the Speakership that he has been engaged in for several years has given him a great degree of unpopularity in the House of Commons. His removal, then, to the Colonial Office and to the House of Lords appears to me to be more useful to the Government than any other suggestion I have heard. The principal cause of his unpopularity being removed, and having no apparent ground for complimenting anybody, he will be a most useful assistant to you on all subjects in debate. He will also do the business of the office well and efficiently, though there will be the same drawback in his career, that he takes no general view of questions, but

his *History of the Abolition* (Wilberforce, i. 141), and to his wrath with Wilberforce when the latter failed to get his brother promoted in the navy (ii. 39).

unfortunately looks too much to the minute. I think, however, upon the whole, he would be more useful to you in that situation than any other I have named. I think Baring[1] would be the most efficient Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the most agreeable to you. Howick is equal to any office he undertakes, and the most indefatigable person I ever knew; but I agree in what you say in that respect about him, that in such an office as Chancellor of the Exchequer he never could go on. Ellice has expressed his determination more than once of never again permanently taking office, but says that he would do so for a short time if *you* asked him. Baring, I think, will be a good appointment. I do not know upon what ground it is that Hobhouse would be glad to have a peerage and go out of office. He is not considered as adding any weight to your Government. If his place was vacant, might it not suit Normanby? I know that he looks to two particular offices, but, if they were not available to him, the Board of Control is surely one of sufficient importance for him to accept. I do not think that the removal of Minto from the Cabinet, and replacing him by Lord Granville, would give any weight or strength. I put aside the question of Brougham to be Chancellor of Ireland to be quite inadmissible for many reasons, amongst others, that you would make Campbell and all his friends perfectly frantic. I think, by some means or other, Morpeth must be in the Cabinet. John Russell could not be expected to go on another session without his assistance, and if no arrangements can be made for the removal of Normanby at present, he must be induced to allow this to take place until some arrangement is made for him.

[1] Sir Francis Baring, father of the present Lord Northbrook. He was then Secretary to the Treasury.

Now for Ireland. I think Radnor would be a popular appointment as Lord Lieutenant, but at the present moment there seems to be a strong feeling there that the Duke of Sussex is to succeed Normanby. As John says, this would be rather hazardous, but at the same time it would be at present very popular, and would soothe the wound, and a very deep one, in him and his friends—who will be found rather a numerous body—on the subject of his treatment in the last session of Parliament.[1] He would be pressed, I have no doubt, to pledge himself to interfere in no way in public matters, but to leave them entirely to the Home Secretary and the Secretary for Ireland. The Duke himself seems to have set his heart very much upon this arrangement; but it is one to be well considered before it is adopted, and it is also to be remarked that Morpeth might not very willingly acquiesce in such a plan. The complaint among our friends generally is the feeble support given to John Russell in the House of Commons, and the want of support to you in the House of Lords. You have six assistants, and, with the exception of Lord Lansdowne, none who can support you,[2] Glenelg, who can speak, having almost entirely given it up, and certainly never interfering except in his own business. In this respect, therefore, Rice would, in a great degree, supply that deficiency. With Morpeth and Baring, John Russell would get great assistance in the House of Commons, and I think they would be both popular. I agree with John Russell in thinking that the whole question must be looked at thoroughly, and, though it

[1] When he applied for an increase of his allowance, which he did not get.

[2] One of them, of course, was Lord Duncannon himself, but he frankly

is very disagreeable, that you must not shrink from giving some efficiency to your Government in both Houses. There are many questions coming on which create great discussion and much angry feeling—Canada, Slave-trade, Poor Laws, Irish Corporations; and, if we are to believe reports, Brougham will not be missing in his attacks. It is most desirable, therefore, that you should prepare for it. I end as I began by saying there is nothing so disagreeable as making these sort of comments, which I would not do to anyone but you and John Russell; but it is right that you should know what people think.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. October 26, 1838.

I AGREE with you that it is necessary to take some step with respect to Glenelg. Shall I ascertain whether he would accept Newport's place, which must be the beginning of all things? Rice in that office would not be a striking appointment, but it would confer more strength in reality than in opinion. If you open the Exchequer, consider whether it would be really wise or prudent or fair to pass over Thomson. He is a much abler man in finance than any of them, has a more complete knowledge of the subject, is clear, short, distinct, and not trammelled with crotchets or scruples. Suppose he were to ask you, 'Why am I passed over?' what could you say to him? You could not say 'You are not the best qualified,' because he certainly is. You could not say that 'you are unpopular,' because that is to make a man's fortune depend upon fancy, taste, and fashion. His connections in the City are as much an objection to his being President of the Board of Trade. I think he would be more easy and happy in the office after all the worry of the other. These are all matters which,

with many others, require consideration; but the principal object of this letter is to ascertain and to determine whether I shall actually initiate the business by learning Glenelg's inclination about the auditorship.

The contemplated changes were made gradually, and only completed by the end of 1839. Lord Glenelg declined the Comptrollership and resigned. He was replaced by Lord Normanby, who soon afterwards exchanged places with Lord John Russell, Lord Normanby going to the Home Office, Lord John to the Colonial. Lord Ebrington went to Ireland. Mr. Spring Rice became Comptroller of the Exchequer, and was raised to the peerage with the title of Lord Monteagle. His place at the Treasury was taken by Sir Francis Baring; 'a fine fellow,' wrote Lord Melbourne, 'who will do anything in his power to assist us, even what he most dislikes.' Mr. Poulett Thomson, though he would undoubtedly have made a good Chancellor of the Exchequer, went to Canada, where he did great things.

The following session was to witness the first step in the direction of a system of public education. Lord Melbourne, unless he is much maligned, once said that he did not believe in education, 'because the Pagets got on so damned well without it;' and his views on the subject were decidedly Conservative in colour.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. South Street, November 27, 1838.

. . . WE talked much yesterday of measures, and particularly of education. The general opinion was that that question could not be escaped nor deferred; that our relations with respect to it must be declared at the very commencement of the session. Upon the question itself I differ. I am against it. I think education at present stands in England upon a better ground than any new one upon which you will place it. I am convinced that if you attempt a combined system you will fail;[1] but

[1] That is, a permanent Government grant to supplement local contributions. There had been an annual grant of 20,000*l.* since 1833.

I have no objection to yield my opinion and try. But before you declare that you intend to propose a plan, you must have a practical plan prepared. It appears to us all, therefore, that the sooner you mature your views upon this subject and reduce them to writing, so that they may be submitted to some members of the Cabinet, the better.

We also considered the last, and perhaps the most important, part of the paper which you sent me by Tavistock, the increase of the navy. It appears to me and to Palmerston that before we decide upon an increase—which will be very inconvenient, will create great alarm and excitement, and tend much to war—it would be better to try if we cannot, by negotiation with Russia, make an arrangement respecting her fleet in the Baltic. If she would agree only to man and equip and put to sea a certain number during the summer we might be content, and save ourselves the expense of a watching armament, under which the country will be very fidgety and impatient, and which appears to me likely to be attended with a thousand evils. If we augment our navy without previously urging anything, of course Russia will put a large force to sea; and thus we may easily each of us assume a hostile attitude when we neither of us really entertain any hostile intentions. It is possible that a representation, made in a friendly tone and spirit, may at once produce such assurances and such measures upon their part as may be satisfactory.

What you say about Macaulay is unanswerable.[1]

Adieu. I daresay what I have written is full of

[1] Apparently something about giving him office. He had already declined the appointment of Judge Advocate-General, but in the following year was appointed Secretary at War with a seat in the Cabinet.

errors, but you must correct them, for I have not time to read it over again.

The same to the same. South Street, December 1, 1838.

UNIONS, &c., amongst the labourers after what has taken place amongst the manufacturers must be expected. They will create much distress to the men themselves, and are very likely to produce disturbance and outrage; but I fear full as much an aggressive and heated mode of dealing with them upon the part of the magistrates and country gentlemen as I do the combinations themselves. I a little doubt the wisdom of refusing relief to those who are engaged in them, seeing that their rules are stated, not only to be legal, but unexceptional. I also think it, on the other hand, unwise to condemn the farmers for giving too low wages. After all, a man is not obliged to pay for a thing more than he can get it for. If you can obtain a clear case and good evidence of incitement to violence and blood, it may be well to consider the prudence of prosecution. I doubt your getting such a case, particularly if you are to take no means of procuring evidence which may be right, but are to trust to what you pick up. My memory does not furnish me with an instance of a conviction for words. There may have been such at assizes or at quarter sessions during the period between 1793 and 1800, when the public feeling was strong against Jacobinism; but no such things ever took place in other times nor in the superior courts. The worst is that it is very easy both to connive and to instigate without committing any act which can be laid hold of.

Naturally averse from agitation of all sorts, Lord Melbourne regarded the Anti-Corn Law League with strong disfavour. 'I have often thought,' he wrote to Lord John Russell, 'that peti-

tions and public meetings are no proof whatever of the real feeling of those who urge them or who attend them.' So strong, however, was the pressure from outside that he had been compelled to acquiesce in the Corn Laws being made an open question. Further than this he was not at present disposed to go. His objections were not, as Greville says, aristocratic, but rather prudential. He saw that a country in which a large industrial population was dependent on a foreign food supply must always be in a precarious position.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Brighton, December 29, 1838.

I RETURN you Rutherford's[1] letter with many thanks. I suppose the present high prices will make the Corn Law a serious question, which it never has been since the year 1815. I own I dread it very much, not so much from either the difficulty or danger of the question itself, though it is both difficult and dangerous, as from the conviction that it will not be settled either one way or the other without a very severe struggle, a struggle which will increase all the evils of the present day by leaving behind it more animosity, discord, and alienation than even prevails at present. Nothing is so bad in my mind as abuse and condemnation of classes of society, and this question naturally produces it.

There are some who hold that a freer importation of foreign corn would not cause a single grain less to be grown in this country. I cannot be of this opinion. If it would diminish the home growth, I cannot but doubt whether a large labouring population, dependent in any considerable degree upon foreign corn, is a safe position, and whether it is not worth some sacrifice to insure a supply within ourselves, as far as it can be insured. Brougham says these opinions are utterly

[1] The Lord Advocate.

exploded; but this is a way of getting rid of them equally summary, easy, and unsatisfactory.

You cannot impose a fixed duty now with prices at their present rate, nor can you at any time maintain it with such a scale of prices. Thomson's idea is prohibition up to an average price of 35*s.*, a fixed duty of 10*s.* from thence to 70*s.*, and after that free importation. This, he says, is the ancient taxation of the country, and if there is to be a change it appears to me the best that can be made. But, depend upon it, any advantage that can be gained is not worth the danger and evil of the struggle by which alone it can be carried, but which may be unavoidable.

I have been ill these two or three days, and almost unable to do anything—gout, or bile, or both—I am better to-day and hope that I shall work it off.

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Poulett Thomson. Downing Street, January 11, 1839.

THIS is a very good address[1] and very true, and as far as the Government is concerned I see no objection to it. It is liable to the same observation as what I said in the House of Lords. Telling people that they have been hitherto silent is exciting them to make a noise in future. But I do not see how this can be helped.

Whether the address is prudent or not is another matter, and one upon which you, who know the people to whom it is directed, are a much better judge than I am. If I were amongst them I should not consider it very conciliatory. It is reproval and condemnation, and there is in it a good deal of sarcasm. The middle and lower orders are very touchy, and above all things hate to be sneered at.

[1] This letter bears the endorsement: 'Address, with Speech on the Corn Laws.'

I Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Downing Street, January 18, 1839.

I THINK this letter will do very well,[1] that is, as an expression of your opinion, which I do not think a very tenable one. If there are no other reasons for a duty on importation except the *peculiar matters* and the land, I doubt whether it can be maintained in argument.

I should wish some words or a sentence to be introduced which should guard against your letter being taken as the opinion of the Government, and should confine it to your own.

I am not prepared, on account of the present high prices, to put myself at the head of this Corn Law movement. If the feeling and opinion are weak, we shall fail. If strong, we shall still only carry it by the same means as we carried the Reform Bill, and I am not for being the instrument or amongst the instruments of another similar performance. I send you a letter upon the subject which I have received from Ebrington, inclosing one from Abercromby, which Ebrington has desired me to show you.

The same to the same. South Street, January 20, 1839.

I AM quite convinced and, as far as I can determine it, determined that the Corn Law should remain open. The present outcry is raised evidently by the master manufacturers, taking advantage of the present dearness of corn, and with the object of lowering wages. It is not at present very strong; but if we, the Government, adopt it, as we shall do by making it a Government measure, we shall strengthen it at once to such a degree that we shall be ourselves carried away by it. Keeping it open will give us time to see what the real feeling is, both in and out of Parliament. I am not prepared to give my

[1] Evidently some declaration in favour of a fixed duty.

voice for a free importation of corn. I doubt whether the property or the institutions of this country can stand it. If you declare at once for a fixed duty, I doubt very much whether you will find yourself able either to oppose it or maintain it.

Plunket is always for taking the wrong step in these matters. It would never have done to have dismissed Oxmanston. There is nothing so bad as a bad precedent. Everybody condemned the dismissal of the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Fitzwilliam, and yet everybody has it always running in his head to do the same. I know that, if we continue in office, I shall be overturned and made *nolens volens* a party to some folly of this kind.

The same to the same. Downing Street, January 21, 1839.

With respect to P. Thomson and the Corn Laws, I do not care how many people are for a fixed duty. All I wish is not to be compelled to pledge myself upon a question in which I do not see my way. I do not see why P. Thomson should not move upon the question as member for Manchester, just as Plunket, when Irish Attorney-General in 1825, moved the Roman Catholic question, whilst Lord Liverpool was against it.

The same to the same. January 23, 1839.

I do not care how open the question is left but I am not prepared to pledge myself to a fixed duty. I hope you will be able to persuade Thomson and Howick to acquiesce in this.

The same to the same. January 29, 1839.

I have heard from and written to Ebrington. I have no objection to enquiring into the operation of the Corn Laws, if that course is thought prudent or would be in the least satisfactory.

Early in the session Lord Roden conducted a grand attack on Lord Normanby's administration of Ireland. It was carried in the House of Lords by a majority of five; but this motion was met by a resolution of Lord John Russell's approving the Irish policy of the Government, which was carried by 318 to 296. The following letter was evidently written in anticipation of some hostile move on the part of the Opposition :—

Lord Normanby to Lord Melbourne. Private. Dublin Castle, January 19 [1839].

CERTAINLY nothing can be further from the proper province of Parliament than to try over again the grounds of particular cases in which the prerogative of mercy has been exercised. Much of the unfounded outcry which has been raised on this subject takes its origin from an entire misconception of what took place in the summer of the year 1836, and to this—wilfully kept up—are to be traced all the newspaper paragraphs about wholesale delivery of prisoners. We had at that time prosecuted to conviction many offences that had not previously been noticed, such as faction fights, &c. The consequence was an improvement in all respects in the state of the country. Under these circumstances, knowing that in this unhappy country there had hardly ever been an attempt to combine, in favour of the laws, attachment with obedience, I thought it would be an experiment worth trying to remit the latter portion of the imprisonment of such persons confined for minor offences as were specially recommended for good conduct by the local authorities of the jails. This did not, however, include any of the worst class of criminals, who neither then nor since have been pardoned or their sentence changed, except upon judicial report or medical certificate or recommendation of law officers. The result of this experiment, which I made in the summer of 1836, was in itself satisfactory. Hardly any of those thus

released were ever committed again. It was tried again to a greater extent in Tipperary than elsewhere and there Howley (in whose opinion Tories have all confidence) said, six months afterwards, in remarking upon the still improving state of the country, that it attributed it in no small degree to the exertion of mercy on my part. But I never contemplated that such an exercise of the prerogative could be otherwise than an exception founded on the peculiar circumstances of the moment, not the general rule.

If, however, I ever had intended to repeat such an experiment, I should, from what afterwards occurred, have felt it right to abstain; *not merely* because I was attacked about it, but that, from the nature of the attack, it was calculated to produce an effect upon the people which would poison all that would have been otherwise purely beneficial in its influence. And this is one of the most mischievous consequences of the novel and unconstitutional measure of making this exertion of the prerogative a ground of party attack. There has, I know, been no *personal* remission of sentence for any offence, however trivial, for the last two years and a half, as, for the reason stated above, I have been peculiarly cautious in this respect; and in consideration of all the more serious cases I am known to take more pains, and more invariably to consult the judges, and more generally to be guided by their opinions than any of my predecessors. Things were managed very differently in the good old Tory times. Baron Pennefather told Howley the other day that he remembered a gentleman of great influence in Tipperary telling him that he had petitioned for a convict, to whom the Baron replied, 'But I am afraid it is a very bad case.' 'To be sure it is,' said the petitioner, 'else it would be no

ompliment.' Judge Moore told me, the first Connaught ircuit he went to two murderers were condemned; one f the Grand Jury said to him, 'One of those men will e hanged.' '*Both* will,' said he. 'Oh no,' replied the rand Juror, '*Lady Sarah* always *saves one.*' Meaning ady Sarah Wynne, of Hazlemont, who was, I believe, Beresford.

The charge to which you have to reply is that as to he prerogative having been lightly and inconsiderately xercised from motives of spurious popularity, or as ondonderry, in his echo of Charleville's speech, says at underland, 'Why were these murderers let loose as ree men on society? Because the *Catholic* priest inter- eded, and the *Catholic* peasantry memorialised on their ehalf.' As those gentlemen are not very scrupulous s to authenticating facts, and as I have, I should hink, had nearer 2,000 than 1,000 of these cases be- ore me in the course of the year, it is not very easy to pply you with the means of meeting all individual acks.

There is, to a public man, no such painful *complaint* o labour under as perpetual *suppression* of defence, and don't think that anyone ever suffered under that to he same extent as I do. No one ever could, except he Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. None of my prede- essors ever were, in the same way, the constant object f attack to a powerful party in a hostile assembly. rom my position [I am] but very rarely furnished vith an occasion to state my own case, and yet attacked n such a succession of small points that it is almost mpossible to furnish anyone else with the means of nswer. When I have had an opportunity I have enerally cleared off old scores, but after a time it all egins again. I must depend upon the shape which

the forthcoming attack takes, whether it would not be well worth any inconvenience once more to meet those slanders face to face.

Lord Spencer to Lord Melbourne. Wixton, February 8, 1839.

THE state of the Corn Law question, and the certainty with which I have ascertained that it will be discussed in the House of Lords on the first day, have frightened me from coming up.[1] I could not avoid stating my opinion upon it if I was in the House of Lords when it was debated at all and the statement of my opinion—which is against Corn Laws altogether—would do you no good, and, I think, would in other ways probably do harm. As an indication of my wish to support you, I have sent my proxy to Lord Falkland, with the request that it may be entered in the name of some decided supporter of the Government; and I will come up and express my confidence in you whenever you give me notice that a fair opportunity is likely to occur, and when you wish me to do so.

I conclude you will not bring on anything about the Corn Laws as a Government measure. My opinion is that, if there are to be any Corn Laws at all, the present system is as good as any that can be devised.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. February 7, 1839.

I DO not myself much like connecting the subject of education with criminal law. It leads to the doctrine which is held by many that the uninstructed are not responsible, and, therefore not fit objects of punishment.

You have much better opportunities of knowing than I have, and therefore are probably right. But I should

[1] On January 3 Lord Spencer had offered to speak, 'as he had heard from Lord Russell that it was desirable that he should say something.'

have doubted whether there was anybody who had not been told that there was a God who would punish him, that Jesus Christ had made atonement for the sins of the world, and that it was displeasing to God, and therefore wrong, to murder and rob. These are the elementary doctrines of Christianity and the simple rules of society. They are strongest in themselves and by themselves. Explaining them and dilating upon them weakens them by perverting and confusing. I should doubt whether, in some way or another, everybody is not made aware of them at present.

Lord Holland to Lord Melbourne. Confidential. April 17, 1839.

HARASSED as I am afraid you are with other business, I yet think it right that you should be furnished with materials for judging what must be done after John's motion is carried [1] (as I have no doubt it will be) by hearing the various reports of the feeling and disposition of those who have helped to carry it. My chief but not my only informant is Ellice, who, I must say, has this time been a grand Facendario to good purposes, both with the press and with M.P.'s. He has made some arrangement (approved, he tells me, by John) about Tommy Duncombe's motion,[2] by which, with Dr. Lushington's assistance, the bad appearance of a large portion of your majority showing instantly afterwards, or at the time, great discontent with you will be mitigated or avoided altogether. Of this he is not a little proud; but be that as it will, his reports of the disposition *indoors* and *out of doors* are very favourable indeed, and, accord-

[1] The motion approving the Irish policy of the Government.

[2] Mr. Duncombe, member for Finsbury, moved a rider to Sir R. Peel's amendment to Lord John Russell's resolution, asserting the expediency of further Parliamentary reform.

ing to him, more susceptible of improvement and condensation than it has been for some time. But then, he strongly insists, and not I believe without reason, that more concert and consultation between what may be called the Government and its supporters than has subsisted lately must be without delay re-established, organised, and understood. As to the ways of doing it, he, of course, has many—too many—good and bad, to suggest, both of a vague and of a precise nature; but that some device should be hit upon for increasing activity, in consulting, in forming, and animating your friends in the House I collect from a variety of quarters, though from none, perhaps, so confidently, so vehemently, and so systematically as from Ellice.

I hear from others, though not from him, that, with a view of showing determination, it would be very desirable to follow up your majority with a creation of, at least, eight peers. I give no very decided opinion of the policy of such a step, though I rather lean to it; but if it is to be adopted I am quite certain it should be done *at once*, and, I suppose, four should be Irish, two English, and two Scotch.

Soon afterwards the long-expected crash came. The Government were defeated on the Jamaica Bill and resigned. Lord Melbourne's note on receiving the news is characteristically laconic:—

South Street, May 9, 1839.

THIS division seems to be decisive. You will, of course, have a Cabinet this morning. Pray direct it to be summoned at twelve.

The circumstances attending the so-called Bedchamber Plot and the return of the Liberals to power are too well known to need any description. It will be seen that Lord Melbourne once more had recourse to his old chief, Lord Grey.

Lord Grey to Lord Melbourne. Private and confidential. Berkeley [illegible]re, May 10, 1839.

I HAVE been thinking constantly of what you stated to me last night, and I cannot say that my sense of the difficulty has been diminished by the result of my reflection.

I cannot conceal from myself that having immediately about the person of the Queen the wives of peers closely connected in office or in political feeling with your administration must be naturally regarded with uneasiness by the Ministers called upon to succeed you. It is not unreasonable, therefore, in them to seek to strengthen themselves, both in public opinion and with their adherents, by the change they have required. On the other hand, the effect of such change on the Queen's comfort is so apparent that one cannot be surprised at her repugnance to it. From what you told me, it also appears that this sacrifice has been pressed upon her in a manner rather harsh and peremptory.

You are bound by every obligation of duty and gratitude to support her Majesty under such circumstances to the utmost of your power, and the paramount consideration for you is whether, by doing so, you may not increase rather than diminish her difficulties. Could your Government, if re-established, stand after all that has happened? And if it should fail, would not the Queen be reduced to the necessity of making at last the sacrifices now required of her, or even more, under still more painful circumstances? These are questions which you must be much better able to answer than I am.

It must be admitted that there is a considerable difference between the situation of a Queen Consort and Queen Regnant. But there is in favour of the Queen's resistance the precedent of what was done in 1830,

when my administration was formed. Not only the ladies of the bedchamber, though the husbands o many of them were decidedly adverse to us, but he whole household were left unmolested; and it was no until Lord Howe actually voted against us, on a vital question, that he was removed.

With this precedent, and with the feeling which the Queen's situation will naturally inspire, I do not feel a all sure that an appeal to the public against the force which is endeavoured to be put upon her might not be successful. If there is a reasonable hope of this—though I do not shut my eyes to the embarrassments that may follow—I think the Queen has the strongest claims upon you to support her, even at the hazard o those difficulties, in the line which she has taken.

I shall not go out till I hear from you, and shall be ready to see you here, or to call upon you, at any time that you will appoint.

P.S.—Pray let me have a copy of this letter, as I am unwilling to delay sending it by having one made

The same to the same. May 11, 1839.

I AM much obliged to you for sending me a copy of Peel's letter. May I keep it? It certainly varies the case, and is artfully enough constructed to put himself in the right. But I do not think, when examined, that it affords any reason to believe that the manner in which the proposition was made to the Queen implied any disposition to limit the application of the principle on which it was founded.

It is very material, in my opinion, that the case should, if possible, be brought into a shape to prevent any discussion of what passed between the Queen and Peel, and of their different understanding on the matter in question.

Lord Melbourne, 'unwilling,' as he said, in the House of Lords, 'to abandon his sovereign in a situation of difficulty and distress,' resumed the conduct of affairs without much enthusiasm. 'Nobody thinks I want to stay, do they?' he is reported to have said. 'But I must think of the poor fellows who have to put down their broughams.' The Cabinet during the ensuing months was hardly a happy family. Not only were the changes in operation which the retirement of Lord Glenelg had begun, but two Ministers quarrelled and were only prevented from resigning through the good offices of Lord Duncannon; and Lord Howick did actually retire from the War Office, where he was succeeded by Macaulay.

The Ballot was made an open question as a sop to the Radicals.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. South Street, June [1839].

THE press is rather an awkward question for the Cabinet. Nobody seems to me cordially to approve the undertaking except Lansdowne, and he does so from his very strong sense of the necessity of something being done.[1]

I do not think the matter of open questions has been as yet well considered either upon precedent or principle. I apprehend that of old the notion of Ministers necessarily voting together upon every question was unknown. They often opposed one another, even upon current business; but when they did so it was certainly a manifest proof of hostility and disunion.

Coalition administration, 1782—Parliamentary reform open, North voting one way, Fox the other; and, I take it, repeal of Test Act also open. Mr. Pitt's administration, 1784—Parliamentary reform open, brought forward by himself as Prime Minister, and rejected upon division. Slave-trade open during the whole of his government. Facts like these shiver all reasoning to pieces.

[1] A scheme for starting a morning paper, and ceasing to give support to the *Morning Chronicle*. See the next letters.

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Poulett Thomson. South Street, June 10, 1839.

I FIND great doubt upon the press scheme in all to whom I speak. It will never do to try it without a general and hearty concurrence. If attempted feebly and despairingly it is sure to fail.

Mr. Poulett Thomson to Lord Melbourne. Confidential. Whitehall, June 10, 1839.

I QUITE agree with you; if undertaken feebly and despairingly the press scheme must fail. So will most things. But it depends on you whether it is to be so or not; and certainly I can neither recommend others to proceed nor have anything to do with it myself unless you are inclined to go into it with spirit.

I look upon our position to be this: We have no morning paper; general complaint is made by the party that they have no organ in the press of their opinions and feelings—nay, worse, that both are misrepresented to the public by the circumstance of the *Chronicle* having still the reputation of being the Government print. Everyone interested in the matter cries aloud for a remedy. The case is instigated by those most competent to do so, and a scheme is submitted which, in their judgment, offers the only chance of success. It is objected to by those who have *not* instigated the subject, and without any substitute being proposed or even hinted at. Are we, under such circumstances, to defer to such vague objections or to proceed? I have done all I can in the matter by bringing it fully before yourself and other members of the Government; and although I feel confident that without a newspaper the Government must fall, yet, as I see so many other rocks on which we shall split, I am indifferent to the end being brought about one way or the other. But I wish to relieve the person who has been consulted and

has consulted others from his responsibility as soon as possible, and therefore I shall be glad to know your determination.

Lord Spencer to Lord Melbourne. Private. Althorp, July 31, 1839.

I SHOULD like to have said in words what I am going to write to you, but I had not an opportunity before I left town, and since my time has been so occupied that I have not been able to write.

You evidently want strength, and it is scarcely possible to point out any means by which you can obtain it. A dissolution of Parliament would, I fear, and indeed am sure, increase the strength of the Tories, and ought not to be thought of unless a state of things should arise in which you could not hold the government. Then, indeed, the circumstances in which you resumed the government render it, I think, imperative upon you to try dissolution before you resign. In the House of Commons I do not see how you can strengthen yourselves, and there the battle must be fought; but in the House of Lords, though it is impossible for you to make any changes which will give you any additional strength which will do you real good, I think it might be possible to relieve yourselves from a very great annoyance, and from one which tends to weaken you. What I mean is, that I think it possible that you may conciliate Brougham. His power and influence over the House of Lords is much greater than I imagined it to be, and I feel confident, without having had any communication with him to make me so, that he would be conciliated if you offered to him to join the administration, whether he would do so or not. I think he would. I admit there are great objections to this. He has made attacks which would compel all of you

to conquer a good deal of unpleasant feeling before you could act with him. As to himself, you and I know him well enough to be sure that if he accepted your offer he would at once forget that he was ever opposed to you, and would act as cordially with you as he ever did with any party with which he was connected. From the observations that I made when I was in town this is the only thing which I can suggest, and it is evident that the constant fire he is keeping up, and his extraordinary activity and persistency, must tell in diminishing the power of the administration. Of course, nothing can be done until after his motion about Ireland, to which, by-the-bye, I shall come up. He does not, as he says, intend the form of the motion to be a censure, but his speech probably will be one; this, however, will not make matters worse than they are. If the form of the motion is a censure it would make them worse.

I shall go to Wixton on Thursday, where I hope to be able to read part, at least, of the evidence, so as not to be as unprepared as I was on the Jamaica question.

The proposal that Lord Brougham should be taken into the fold once more never came to anything. Still, Lord Melbourne was not well satisfied with the state of affairs. He wrote to Lord John Russell in September: 'By one set of people we are told that we are ruining ourselves and losing support by allying ourselves with the Radicals and Roman Catholics; by another that we are producing the same effect by leaning too much to the Tories and Conservatives. Probably both statements are true, and we are losing credit on both sides.'

The following letters from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir F. Baring, illustrate the dangers attendant on the connection between the Government and the Bank of England, upon which Mr. Walter Bagehot commented so acutely in 'Lombard Street':—

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ɔeptember
19, 1839.

I HAVE just seen my brother,[1] and I think it right to let you know the state of things in the City. Jourdain has returned from Paris.[2] The Rothschilds will take up the bills of the U.S. Bank if Jourdain deposits with them securities to the amount of, say, 200,000*l*. If Jourdain does this he strips himself of the means of meeting his engagements in England, for which, as I understand, he will require 800,000*l*. within the fortnight, and a large sum even on Monday. In these circumstances he will go to-morrow to the Bank of England and ask whether they will hold him up. . . .

Under these circumstances I shall remain in town, and put off my going into the country till Saturday. I think it possible that the Bank may wish to see me. It is their old policy to shift off the responsibility as far as possible on the Government. I think it desirable that there should be a Minister for them to see; but I propose to tell them that it is a subject for their consideration and determination, and that they must not expect any opinion from me.

It seems to me that, independent of any general rule as to giving opinions to the Bank as to the management of their concerns and the power vested in them by their charter of superintending the currency of the country, it becomes more particularly objectionable and dangerous for the Government to give any expression of their opinion as to an advance to any particular house—a question which must depend upon circumstances of which the Government must be most entirely ignorant.

[1] Mr. Thomas Baring.

[2] Jourdain seems to have been a financier. He does not appear in the biographical dictionaries.

So far, I think, the course is clear. But I conjecture it is probable they will push me as to what will be the decision of the Government if the drain continues—*i.e.* whether we will issue an Order in Council to suspend payments in bullion. To this I should be inclined to say to them that they must look to themselves, and that the Government will not interfere, but they must pay so long as they have a shilling in their chest. Of course I shall put this in official language. I think this, at any rate, the right language to hold to them. The more so as Rice told me that they had been talking about an Order in Council some time ago.

It appears also to me the right course in itself. It was Huskisson's and Lord Liverpool's language in 1826. I have had a talk also with Thomson and Rice (the former I saw on purpose, and asked him what he proposed in case of things coming to the worst). They both considered that payments should not be suspended, but the Bank left to itself.

But, without attempting to decide that question finally, I still consider that such is the language which should be held to the Bank as the only safe language for the Government to hold to them to keep them in order. I will not enter into the measures which will be necessary if the Bank is really drained.

I propose to send this by the early post to-morrow, not merely with the view of giving you notice of what is going on, but of laying before you the course which it appears to me to be the best to pursue in any conversation I may have with the Bank, and obtaining from you any advice or suggestion you may wish to make. If I want you I shall have no scruple in sending for you, but I don't think it well you should come up in a hurry to see the Governor and Deputy-Governor of

the Bank, and that to appear in the papers at this moment.[1]

October 2, 1839. I HAVE just seen the Deputy-Governor of the Bank. He is *very* gloomy. They talk of raising the rate of interest. The question will be discussed to-morrow. Money is very scarce to-day.

Jourdain's affair is not settled. The Bank offered 300,000*l.* if they could get other houses to come forward. They have not succeeded, and it is therefore a doubt how far he will be able to get on. To-morrow a large amount of his engagements fall due. The days of grace will bring him to Saturday, and on Monday half a million is expected by the *Great Western*. This is a narrow shave.

The suggestions of Mr. Attwood, who had retired from active politics, for the improvement of the currency appear to have been received by Lord Melbourne quite as unfavourably as they afterwards were by Sir Robert Peel.

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Attwood. Windsor Castle, October 1, 1839. I BEG leave to acknowledge your letter of the 27th inst., which I received here yesterday. I thank you for it.

You know very well that I differ from you. I differ from your opinions, from your views and objects, and still more from the measures which you have taken to accomplish them.[2] I always considered those measures certain to lead to the consequences to which they have led—danger to those whom you encouraged, danger to the State, and their own failure.

I trust now that your anticipations will not be realised, but I shall be happy to consider any suggestions which you may think of importance.

[1] This letter was forwarded to Lord John Russell on September 20, with Lord Melbourne's cordial approval.

[2] That is, the Birmingham League and its political developments.

The following letter obviously relates to the Queen's betrothal to Prince Albert:—

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Confidential. Windsor Castle, October 13, 1839.

WHAT I mentioned to you the other day is exactly taking the course which I expected, and which I then traced out to you. A very strong impression is evidently made, and as much was said to me to-day as is sufficient to prove that the mind is, in fact, made up, and will be declared shortly. I think, myself, that it is time that this should be effected, and I do not know that anything better could be done. He seems a very agreeable young man—he is certainly a very good-looking one—and as to character, that we must always take our chance of. Supposing it to be decided, what should you say with respect to time? Delay in such matters is always objectionable. It would, of course, be, in every point of view and for every purpose, necessary to have a Parliament.

In November Chartism found vent in the 'Frost riots' at Newport, Monmouthshire.

The Marquess of Normanby to Lord Melbourne. Home Office, November 5 [1839].

I HAVE by this morning's post received several letters from different persons in the neighbourhood of Newport and Tydvil, with the account of a serious riot which took place at the former town yesterday evening. About nine o'clock a large body of Chartists from the neighbouring ironworks entered the town and commenced an attack upon the inn where the military were (about thirty men of the 85th Regiment) in charge of some persons who had been arrested on suspicion during the evening before. The attack seems to have been very resolute. The Mayor was wounded severely, but not dangerously, with two gunshot wounds, and two other gentlemen

were also wounded. After the firing had continued (as the reports say) for half an hour the mob retired, about eight of them having been killed, and many others wounded. Some of the letters describe them as having been dispersed, others as preparing for another attack; but all ask for additional force.

I have settled with Fitzroy Somerset that the 45th Regiment shall march at once from Winchester for Bristol, and that two guns shall be sent from Woolwich to Bristol, in case they should be required. In consequence of a note received yesterday from the Mayor of Newport, in which, though professing not to participate in the alarm himself, he asks for more force, we have already given directions for a troop of cavalry to move this morning from Clifton to Chepstow, and another from Abergavenny to Usk (?). From Monmouth, which was the place which the gentleman I saw last night represented to be in danger, we have no direct accounts at all this morning, but a letter from the Mayor to the Mayor of Bristol, which the latter forwards this morning, represents the rumour of an intended attack to prevail, and demands reinforcements.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, November 6, 1839.

I SEND you the letter which I have received this morning from Normanby. I hope now that this will go no further; but what I do not like in it is that there was a disposition to rise throughout the whole district which was totally unknown and unsuspected until the moment before it was about to be carried into execution. If this were to be done in many places much mischief might be done. Such a mode of proceeding is a thousand times more dangerous than unions and great meetings, which are always known beforehand, and provided against. It is

also a little awkward after having taken merit for our mode of dealing with Chartism.[1]

Lord Melbourne to Lord Beauvale. Windsor Castle, November 24, 1839.

I WRITE a line by the post because the matter to which it relates may come under consideration very soon, although there does not appear at present to be as much feeling upon the subject as there was this time last year. In one of your letters which I saw some time ago you said that the real objection to the English corn laws was one which you had never yet seen stated, and that was that the Continental nations will never, upon any account or upon any consideration, admit the English manufactures to anything like a fair competition with their own. Now, if you had not said that you had never seen the objection stated, I should have conceived that you only meant that the manufacturing interests which had grown up upon the Continent were so strong, and the determination of the governments to protect them so firm, that the admission of our manufactures could never be carried against the resistance that had been made to it. But your saying that you had never seen the assertion stated makes me think that you may possibly mean something else or something more, because this statement has been made over and over again, and is the main argument in every pamphlet and every debate upon that side of the question. How is this? I shall be glad to hear this and anything else you may have to say upon the subject. How are you? I am pretty well, but John is low and not a little anxious about the great matters which are pending.

[1] The riot was, however, very promptly crushed, and Frost, who according to Lord Normanby 'showed himself an arrant coward throughout,' was condemned to be hanged, but escaped on a technical plea.

Lord Melbourne was more than once called over the coals for having presented Robert Owen, the Socialist, at Court. However, the frankness of his explanation ought to have disarmed even the Bishop of Exeter :—

Lord Melbourne to Mr. E. Baines. Confidential. Windsor Castle, December 20, 1839.

I HAVE received your letter, with the one enclosed from Mr. Giles. I beg to assure you, and I request you to assure Mr. Giles, that you may most safely, and in the most decisive manner, contradict the notion of there being any approbation on my part of Mr. Owen's opinions, or of any willingness to propagate or encourage them. I have more than once heard Mr. Owen's statements, and I have always told him that his doctrines appeared to me the most absurd, and he himself one of the most foolish men I ever conversed with. I always considered that his principles were too ridiculous to be dangerous. In this, however, I may be mistaken, and may underrate the folly and weakness of those to whom he addresses himself.

He came to me in the summer, and having conversed for some time said that he was going abroad, that before he went he wished to be presented at Court, as he found great inconvenience in other countries from not having been there, and asked whether, for that purpose, he might put my name upon his card. Unguardedly and imprudently, without much thinking, and in order to get rid of him, I said yes; and hence all this scandal and outcry.

At the same time I must say in general that I should not think myself justified in refusing to present a gentleman, at least on account of his opinions, either political or religious.

The following letter from John Allen, of Holland House, appears to belong to this year :—

Mr. Kemble told me the other day that the Historical Society had been obliged to discontinue the publication of the Anglo-Saxon Charters, which they had begun under his editorship; but when I expressed my regret that so interesting a work should not be completed, he said that the plan on which they had been begun and carried on was bad, inasmuch as they had made him omit the descriptions of the lands conveyed by the charters, which are very curious and valuable for local history, containing as they do the names of many hamlets, fields, woods, rivulets, &c., which are known by the same names at present.

It occurred to me that it would be an object worth the expense if Government would undertake the work anew, beginning again from the commencement, and inserting what the Historical Society had, from the scantiness of their funds, been obliged to omit; and on mentioning this idea to Mr. Kemble he expressed his willingness to engage in such a work in conjunction with his friend Mr. Thorpe, adding that it would be no injury to the Historical Society, because the few copies of the work they had printed for sale were already disposed of.

It appears to me, I confess, that this is a work that would do credit to the Government that undertakes it. It is from the charters only that one can learn the tenure of lands, their descent, the burdens and liabilities to which they are subject, and the origin of the irregularifies in these subjects that still prevail in England. One also learns from them all that can be known of the internal administration of the country, as well as the condition of the different classes of the people.

Since the Queen's accession nothing has been done for historical literature but the completion of the Anglo-

Saxon Laws by Thorpe, which was begun under her predecessor. France has in the last years been more active in collecting and publishing the memorials of her past than in any period of her existence. The German States are employed in the same work, and even the Piedmontese Government has awakened to the importance of collecting and preserving whatever can throw light on the ancient history of the country. Are we the only people who have no curiosity about the past? Is the history of our own nation the only one not worth investigation? Are we so poor that we cannot spare the funds which even Denmark and Modena found means to contribute to so laudable a purpose? It was under Anne, and by the advice of Lord Somers, that the great publication of Rymer was carried on. Let future ages be able to say that her example was followed by Victoria and her advisers.

I shall say no more, but leave the subject to your own reflections.

In the session of 1840 a measure for the summary protection against legal processes of persons employed in the publication of Parliamentary papers was passed on the lines indicated in the following letter:—[1]

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor

I RETURN you the Attorney-General's letter. I have received the Duke of Sussex's and the Duke of Cambridge's full assent to Prince

[1] The question was raised by the case of Stockdale *v.* Hansard, of which it is enough to say that Messrs. Hansard published, in a Parliamentary report, an unfavourable comment on a medical work published by Mr. Stockdale. Stockdale brought an action for libel against Hansard, who pleaded privilege of Parliament, but the Court of Queen's Bench gave judgment against him. The House of Commons upheld Hansard. Stockdale was committed, on the motion of Lord John Russell, supported by Sir R. Peel, for breach of privilege, and the Sheriffs of London for refusing to refund the money they had received for selling Hansard's goods. Here was a deadlock, which could only be settled by legislation.

Castle, January 1, 1840. Albert's taking precedence of them. I think he should do so, but not of the Prince of Wales.

The privilege question is a difficult one in form and appearance, but not in substance and sense. I never saw a more disorderly and unparliamentary suggestion than that of Campbell's respecting the course which the Speaker should take. The Speaker knows nothing of leaders or of parties—it is disorderly even to suppose their existence; and it is his business to receive the directions of the House, not to give them.

The courts of law are wrong. I have no doubt of that; and they are wrong in consequence of the little attention which the lawyers of the present day pay to, and the little knowledge which they possess of, constitutional and Parliamentary law, and which renders their authority not equal to that of the abler judges. But, although they are wrong, they are not corruptly or criminally wrong; they commit an error, and therefore it will not do to proceed against them with anything of harshness or violence.

The Houses of Parliament possess this privilege, or ought to possess it. Everybody, I understand, admits the latter; everybody admits that it is a power necessary to the discharge of their duty. But the judges say they have it not. Certain it is that they have no effectual means of asserting their privilege. It will never do to have a war of conflicting power carried on at this time of day between two of the constituted authorities of the State, a war which will render both contemptible, and which can never terminate the question. Why, then, you must interpose with a law. There are difficulties certainly in framing it—whether it should be enacting or declaratory; but if all men are agreed that the power

is not effectually possessed at present, and that it ought to be possessed, surely there can be no difficulties in the way of giving or confirming it which may not be overcome.

The Ministry were promptly involved in the difficulties connected with Prince Albert's allowance and his precedence. Lord Melbourne's prudence induced him to avoid the latter point by withdrawing the clause from the Naturalisation Bill.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. South Street, February 2, 1840.

CLARENDON,[1] by my desire, saw the Duke of Wellington yesterday, who received him very kindly, and answered him very frankly. But he adheres to the precedence, and says that it will be an injustice to the other branches of the Royal family to give Prince Albert precedence over them, even for the Queen's life, which, he says, would be objectionable, besides placing the Prince in an unpleasant position on the Queen's death. If he persists in his resolution—as he certainly will, since he considers it a matter of justice—we shall, of course, be beat; and I am clearly of opinion that we had better give up the point at once and adhere to the precedents of the Prince of Denmark and Prince Leopold.

Lord Melbourne, on occasions, was quite competent to instruct a bishop in ecclesiastical history:—

Lord Melbourne to the Bishop of Lincoln. South Street, May 24, 1840.

I AM much obliged to you for your letter. From the few words which passed between us in the House of Lords I perfectly understood your meaning, and the manner in which you now explain it.[2]

If the legislature were to alter the Articles

[1] Lord Clarendon had joined the Government as Lord Privy Seal.

[2] The Bishop of Lincoln had deprecated any alteration in the Liturgy, a petition in favour of which had been presented by the Archbishop of Dublin.

or the Liturgy, and to direct the clergy to subscribe the new Articles and read the new Liturgy in their churches under pain of deprivation, it would be for them to consider whether they would obey such a law; and if they were to decide not to do so, they would be placed in the same situation with those numerous clergymen who refused compliance with the Act of Uniformity. When Tillotson, in the year 1789, attempted, in conjunction with some of the most eminent prelates and divines of the day, a scheme of comprehension such as is printed upon the petition presented yesterday, it was earnestly pressed by Calamy and the leading Dissenters to try and effect this object, as the Reformation had been effected, solely by Act of Parliament, and not to resort to the Convocation, where they confidently foretold his utter failure. He, being a conscientious and scrupulous and, as was reproached to him, a somewhat timid man, and very sensitive to the reproach of the Church of England being a Parliamentary Church, and also probably holding your lordship's opinion that what he aimed at could only rightly originate with the Convocation, persisted in his own course, and was almost immediately defeated in the Lower House of Convocation, although successful in the other.

Such I feel certain would be the result of any similar effort at present; and I hope that you will not, from anything that I have said, think that I have any wish to see Parliament undertake the task of amending the Articles or the Liturgy. I deprecate such a movement as much as you do, and the errors in both must be shown to be much more glaring and much more certain than any that I have seen charged upon them before I could be induced to countenance such a proceeding.

During the remainder of the session the Government were not pressed very hard, chiefly owing to the dissensions among their opponents, though they suffered numerous defeats on Lord Stanley's Irish Registration Bill. The following letter relates to the Canadian Clergy Reserves Bill :—[1]

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. South Street, July 3, 1840.

I WILL have every exertion made for Tuesday. If Hardwicke presses, and the Duke votes with him, we shall certainly be beat. Even if the Duke should discountenance the motion it may still be doubtful. It may be necessary to consider such a defeat as decisive, but it will place us in a new situation. We shall have to resign the government upon a question upon which those who are to replace us are themselves divided. We shall give up the government upon grounds upon which our opponents are unable consistently to form one. This, in my opinion, requires consideration.

The Irish Municipal Corporations Bill at last became law, after a protest from Bishop Phillpotts, and the introduction of several amendments by Lord Lyndhurst, which the Commons at first rejected. Lord Melbourne apparently thought that any settlement of the question was better than none.

August 6, 1840.

LYNDHURST has written to Duncannon that it is impossible to agree to the amendments in the Irish Municipal Bill. I suppose you will not insist on them.

In Lord Melbourne's correspondence for the remainder of the year there is nothing of any particular moment, except his letters on the Syrian question, which will be found in Chapter XIII. Nor, when we come to 1841, is there any record of the process by which the Prime Minister was induced to abandon his previous declarations, and consent to a fixed duty of 8*s*.

[1] Sir Robert Peel had approved of the measure in the House of Commons. Lord Hardwicke's attack did not succeed, as the Duke recommended that the Bill should be passed.

a quarter on wheat. There is a good story to the effect that, after the Cabinet dinner at which the momentous decision was taken, he called from the top of the staircase to his departing colleagues, 'Stop a bit; is it to lower the price of bread, or isn't it? It doesn't much matter which, but we must all say the same thing.'

The Scottish Church question was met by Lord Melbourne with a simple *non possumus*.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Dunfermline. Windsor Castle, April 20, 1841.

I HAVE been somewhat embarrassed by the Scotch Church question, by the consciousness that I was practically utterly ignorant of it myself, and by feeling at the same time that I had no means of attaining advice or information upon which I could with any security rely. All opinions are so infected and biassed by a strong party and religious feeling. Upon general principles I never saw so clear. First, I do not know how I could reconcile it to my conscience to take the part of any Church or of anything ecclesiastical anywhere in opposition to the law, which is and ought to be the supreme government of every country. Secondly, I do not know how I could, with my opinions, agree to anything which was to place the election of ministers more in the hands of the congregations than it is at present. And, thirdly, even if the Church were right in their desires, the manner in which they have been asserted and enforced cannot be justified or even excused.

At the same time I am well aware that it will not do to keep steady upon the soundest theory and the most undoubted general principles; and upon this subject I have nothing but theory—principles against practice, circumstances, feelings, and the actual usage and working of institutions. I may, therefore, possibly be induced ultimately to acquiesce in measures inconsistent with these principles, and therefore I should

not wish to be considered as pledging myself irrevocably and unchangeably even to their maintenance; but it will be with great unwillingness, under strong compulsion, and I do not see the possibility of my doing so at present. I write in confidence, but I think it is well to put you in possession of my general views upon a subject which I am conscious of not well understanding, and which the many publications on the subject do not appear to me satisfactorily to elucidate.

I was very glad to hear from you, especially as my doing so has been of late rather a rare occurrence.

On the production of the Free Trade Budget it became evident that the days of the Ministry were numbered. Then came the question whether or no they should dissolve. Lord Melbourne was decidedly against the proceeding, as he foresaw that it would be followed by a crushing defeat.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. South Street, May 13, 1841.

I RETURN you the Chancellor's letter, which I have well considered. But I cannot reconcile myself to advising a dissolution in the present circumstances. It is of great importance to make the country clearly understand the difference between us and the Opposition; but I cannot agree to any course that is to lead necessarily to a dissolution. To show an intention to dissolve, and to be beat by the House of Commons out of that intention, will be very humiliating both to the Crown and the Government.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. South Street, May 14, 1841.

MANY thanks for your letter. What I said in 1839 was the real expression of my feeling, which is now exactly the same as it was then. I said what I did yesterday because, that being the strong impression upon my mind, I thought myself bound to declare it, and I also wished to declare

that I was ready, as I am, to take upon myself the whole responsibility of the decision.

The effect of such a decision upon the Liberal party is a consideration of great importance, and its effect upon one's own character and future influence is an element by no means to be overlooked; but too great sacrifices must not be made to either of these two objects, particularly not to the latter.

From the manner in which the Tory party have gained upon us at the two last General Elections; from the result of single elections, and the manner in which these events have been brought about; from the prevalence of the late Poor Law cry, I feel persuaded that we shall be greatly beat at a General Election, and that by giving the Tories that opportunity we shall give them a great advantage. We shall give them an appearance of strength greater than they really possess, and we shall ourselves show weaker than we really are.

If we do not dissolve ourselves we lose the advantage of the government influence, and we incur the disadvantage, whatever it may be, of our friends being hereafter offended, disgusted, and discouraged. But these disadvantages are not, in my opinion, equal to the great shout which would now be raised against us by the united voice of all the interests which we are about to affect. If we could get them to prevent us from dissolving by refusing or postponing the sugar duties [1] I am aware of the advantage it would be; but we cannot do this without pledging ourselves to dissolve if they do not take that course.

Recollect, also, that if they bring on a motion in

[1] The Ministry were defeated on the sugar duties by 371 votes to 281. They did not resign, however, until Sir R. Peel carried a motion of want of confidence by 312 votes to 311.

the House of Lords the Corn Laws would make us very weak there, and prevent many of those who have hitherto supported us from voting with us. I will, however, well consider the whole matter before to-morrow. Cabinet at one.

Colleague after colleague, however, pressed upon the Prime Minister the expediency of advising a dissolution, and he yielded, with the result that he had anticipated.[1]

Lord Palmerston to Lord Melbourne. C. T., May 14, 1841.

I DO not like to plague you about a matter on which I have already expressed my opinion, but I cannot help saying that everything I hear from our own friends shows that the party are most anxious for dissolution, and I think the papers of every morning show that we have the strong feeling of the country with us. I know that too much faith ought not to be placed on calculations made beforehand as to election results; but I understand that in our calculation both seats at Winchester are put down as lost, and yet the Dean has been here to say that one seat is, in his opinion, certainly ours, and that we might have a chance of the other.

But at a General Election the feeling of the country is the best guide to guess by, and that seems getting to be decidedly with us.

The anti-slavery cry has, you see, failed; and if it were possible to hold out a prospect of some modification of the Poor Law in regard to outdoor relief in towns with more than a certain number of inhabitants (which I really believe would be just and proper), we should strike the Poor Law cry dead.

Are there not reasons for a dissolution, founded on

[1] There is a good description of the Cabinet council at which the dissolution was decided upon in the extracts from Hobhouse's 'Memoirs' (*Edinburgh Review*, 133).

the balanced state of parties in the House of Commons; can either party go on with this Parliament? And if you would have been obliged to dissolve this summer or autumn, as I think you would, even had the Tories remained quiet, why not seize the favourable moment which the present excitement in our towns creates?

I cannot myself see how such a course can place the Queen in a difficulty; on the contrary, it seems to me to tend, at least, to relieve her from difficulty.

It has been evident during the last two nights to those who have sat in the House of Commons, and have observed the countenances of the people opposite us, that a gloom prevails in the Tory camp. Whether this proceeds from dread of an appeal to the country, or from difficulties arising among themselves, I know not; but it probably springs from both.

Let me mention what passed between two of our colleagues as the last Cabinet broke up. Clarendon said to the Chancellor, 'Well, I see it is all up, and there will be no dissolution. I shall not venture to show my face in London, and shall go and hide myself for a month in the country.'[1] 'I don't think,' replied the Chancellor, 'that a *month* will be *enough*.'

At this juncture the retirement of Lord Plunket from the Irish Chancellorship in favour of Lord Campbell brought considerable discredit on the Ministry, because it was known to have been effected by pressure. The whole transaction was looked upon as a job, though his successor, Lord Campbell, resigned all claims to the pension attached to the office. It certainly was an ungracious act, and one which could only be palliated by Campbell's long-standing claims for promotion; claims which he was by no means backward in urging. In 1839 Lord Melbourne had been informed by Lord Morpeth that

[1] Lord Clarendon, according to Greville, was at first against a dissolution, but changed his opinion.

Plunket 'was willing to retire or remain as suited the Government.'[1] But when the Lord Lieutenant broached the subject, it appeared that the Lord Chancellor had no intention of retiring; and Lord Melbourne had no other course, as he wrote to Lord John Russell, 'but to write and urge him to remain, and to assure him that the matter was only mentioned under the notion that it was his wish to retire.' Meanwhile the solicitations of Campbell appear to have continued, and at last Lord Melbourne felt himself compelled to make a direct appeal to Lord Plunket's generosity. His letter has, at any rate, the merit of breaking an unpleasant truth in a courteous manner:[2] —

Lord Melbourne to Lord Plunket. Private. South Street, June 6, 1841.

THE great friendship which you have ever felt and shown for myself personally, and the disinterested anxiety to serve your political friends and advance your political principles by which your conduct has been invariably marked, make me not only hope but feel confident that you will receive with indulgence the matter which I am now about to open to you. You see the struggle in which we are engaged, and you are aware that many Ministerial arrangements must be necessary on the approaching dissolution of Parliament. Amongst these it would be most convenient, and we are most anxious, to provide for the Attorney-General, which the present state of the Courts of Law will not allow us to do in this country. Under these circumstances, I have thought it not impossible that you might be willing to seek that retirement and repose to which your long, able, and most distinguished services so well entitle you. I have thought it the most honest and open course to

[1] Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell, October 21, 1839.

[2] See Mr. David Plunket's *Life, Letters, and Speeches of Lord Plunket*, vol. ii. p. 333, where the letter is given. It would appear from Lord Campbell's *Life* that he really thought that Plunket's consent had been obtained, and when he heard the true state of affairs the delay had put his seat at Edinburgh in jeopardy.

tell you at once the object which we have in view, and the reasons why we seek it. If it is repugnant to your feelings, say so at once, and there is an end of the matter. If you accede, you will add to the gratitude which we already owe for the support and assistance which you have rendered us. Whatever may be your determination, you will keep the matter entirely secret for the present.

When Parliament met again, the Ministry were defeated on the Address in both Houses, and Lord Melbourne announced his resignation on August 30. He was probably glad to be gone. The Queen was no longer without an adviser; the Bedchamber difficulty had been disposed of through his own and the Prince Consort's diplomacy. His part, in fact, was played.

Mr. G. E. Anson to Lord Melbourne. Private. Windsor Castle, August 30, 1841.

I HAD wished to say a few words on parting this morning, but Uxbridge's coming in restrained my utterance.

We are now on the eve of commencing a new era, and that cannot but forcibly remind us of the past, and make me wish to express to you the deep and lasting sense of the obligation I am under to you personally, and which is constantly recurring to my mind. I owe you far more than I can ever hope to have an opportunity of showing you any acknowledgment for; but I hope I shall only be *one* of the *many* who will ever retain a most grateful recollection of the invariable kindness and benefits which I have received from my friend and patron.

The Prince desires me to reassure you of the *real grief* with which he said farewell to-day. It is, however, a great comfort to him to feel that your friendship to the Queen and himself will never vary, and will always bear any trial to which it may be put. The Queen has been much affected since you left, but is calm again.

CHAPTER XII

CANADA

1837–1841

AT the beginning of the new reign it was evident that Lower Canada was fast drifting into rebellion, and a considerable portion of the inhabitants of Upper Canada seemed ready for revolt.[1] A section of the Cabinet felt that, under the circumstances, the Colonial Office ought to be placed in stronger hands than those of Lord Glenelg, and Lord Howick made himself the mouthpiece of their views:—

Lord Howick to Lord Melbourne. Private. Holland House, December 29, 1837.

'I RECEIVED your letter last night, and I admit the force of the reasons you assign for not making any such change as I had suggested; they ought to have occurred to me sooner. This remedy for the evil I pointed out being impracticable, the only one which remains is that you should yourself assume the management of Canadian business; in the situation in which you are placed it is in your power to do this, and in the present crisis it seems to me positively your duty. You will excuse my saying that, in my opinion, you ought much sooner to have given your serious attention to the

[1] Upper Canada was saved by the resource of its Governor, Sir Francis Head, who threw himself upon the loyalty of the Militia, and sent his regular troops to the assistance of Lord Gosford in Lower Canada. His conduct in other respects, however, was not equally meritorious; he was reprimanded, and came home. When he went to Lord Melbourne and asked to be allowed to justify himself, all the satisfaction he received was, 'But you are such a damned odd fellow;' a verdict fully justified by his indiscreet book, *A Narrative of Recent Events in Canada.*

affairs of this colony, in conducting which you must be sensible that hitherto you have given no real assistance to Glenelg. There is no man more capable than yourself of forming a correct judgment as to what ought to be done under all the difficulties of the case, and of acting firmly upon that judgment; but in order to do this, you must in the first place have an accurate knowledge of the real state of things, and from what I have observed I cannot be mistaken in concluding that you have not taken the pains necessary for acquiring this knowledge. Let me entreat you to rouse yourself from your past inaction, to make yourself really master of the facts by which your opinion must be guided, and, having done so, to set yourself resolutely to consider what can now be done to repair the fatal errors of the last three years. Remember that the continuance of the same weak and undecided policy which has hitherto been pursued will infallibly lead to the disgraceful loss of all our North American colonies after a calamitous struggle, and too probably to the still greater misfortune of a general war. I grieve to think how deeply we are all responsible for the lives which have already been lost.

P.S.—I hope I am not presuming unpardonably upon your good nature in writing this letter; but the painful interest I take in the issue of this business must be my apology.

The rebellion was promptly suppressed by the British troops, under the command of Sir John Colborne, and the Ministry resolved to send out Lord Durham, armed with special powers. His proceedings, however, were hardly calculated to allay discontent, and there was a great outcry at his inconsiderateness in taking out with him men who, though their abilities might be considerable, were damaged in character.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Durham. Private and separate. South Street, July 2, 1838.

You do not mention it in your despatch nor in your two letters to me which I have received, but the *Quebec Gazette*, which you have sent, leaves no doubt that you made the appointment of Mr. Turton to be one of your secretaries and a member of the Executive Council one of the first and foremost acts of your government.[1] You must be well aware, after the letters which you must by this time have received, and the statement which by this time you must have read of what passed in the House of Lords immediately upon your departure, that this step must necessarily place us all, and me more particularly, in great difficulty and embarrassment. I have been questioned to-night in the House of Lords upon the subject by Lord Wharncliffe, and I could not, of course, say otherwise than that I had heard of the appointment with great concern and great surprise, and that when I had made my former statement—to which, of course, he called attention—I thought that I had had reason to expect that no such appointment would be made. I could not say other nor less than this, because I must own it appears to me most wonderful that you should have done this so hastily, so precipitately, and so entirely without consultation. If the public feeling here was such as to render it advisable that no appointment should be made here before you went, you could not suppose that it could either be satisfied or evaded by making the appointment upon the other side of the water immediately upon your arrival. I write this upon my own account, and without having consulted with others. What steps it may be necessary to take in this matter it is impossible at this

[1] Mr., afterwards Sir Thomas, Turton, was a member of the Calcutta Bar at the time of his appointment.

moment to say; but it must be considered and determined upon. With the exception of this unfortunate, and from the beginning most ill-advised proceeding, your letters seem to be satisfactory, and I will take an early opportunity of writing what occurs to me upon them.

The same to the same. South Street, July 17, 1838.

I WILL write once for all about this unfortunate and foolish affair of Mr. Turton. It will do you much harm; it will do me much harm; it will do your government and your mission some harm. It is one of those gratuitous and unnecessary difficulties which men most unaccountably create for themselves, and which are generally greater than any which are created for them by the natural course of events.

You never ought to have entered into any negotiation with him upon the suggestion of others without distinctly naming it to me. You must have known, and you did know, the objections that would arise.

When, in consequence of the state of public feeling here, you were persuaded that it was necessary to give up making the appointment, who could have expected that you would make that appointment the first act of your government upon your arrival? and, considering the ferment which prevailed upon the subject at the time of your sailing, you must have expected that the matter would be mentioned in Parliament; and was it ordinary discretion not to wait until you learned whether it had been so mentioned, and what had been said by the Government upon the subject?

It is not fair to yourself, it is not fair to the Government, it is not fair to the important duty which you have undertaken to discharge, to array and to enlist

against yourself so great a mass of public feeling as you have done by the association with yourself and your government of this gentleman and of others whom you have with you. This feeling may be prejudiced and erroneous; but, even if such be the case, it does not diminish its strength or render it less formidable.

I have now expressed myself fully and distinctly upon what has passed, and I shall revert to it no more. With respect to the future, I understand from your letters of the 16th ult. that you cannot consent to alter the appointment which you have made. You will by this time have received the two last letters which I wrote to you upon the subject—the one upon hearing the report of Mr. Turton's appointment, and the other upon being certified by the *Quebec Gazette* that it had taken place. If these should make no alteration in your determination, I cannot, of course, take upon myself the responsibility of pushing matters to an extreme which would hazard the interruption of that course of policy in Canada which you have auspiciously commenced; but in that case you must be prepared for the result of any motion in Parliament upon the subject. I am prepared to resist such a motion; but if it should be carried, I hope that you will be prepared to acquiesce in it.

Upon all other matters, upon all parts of your conduct, except as far as relates to Mr. Turton, I have only to express, according to my present information, my full approbation and concurrence, and my congratulations upon the good effects which your measures appear to have already produced.

The same to the same.

I WROTE to you yesterday upon this appointment of Mr. Turton. You will see by the re-

South Street, July 18, 1838.

ports in the newspapers that I have been again questioned in the House of Lords by Lord Winchelsea with respect to Mr. Gibbon Wakefield.[1] It is currently said that he has received some appointment from you. Of course, after your last letter, I feel confident that this is not the case, and I have not scrupled to say so; but the event in the case of Mr. Turton renders people the less willing to believe me than they would have been before that unlucky and most precipitate measure. If this report of the appointment of Mr. Wakefield were to be confirmed, no power on earth could prevent an address to remove both him and Mr. Turton from being moved and carried in the House of Lords, and I believe in the House of Commons. It is incredible that a man of common sense should show such an ignorance or such a disregard of public feeling and opinion as you have done in the selection of these gentlemen. If their abilities and powers were superhuman they would not counterbalance the discredit of their characters. They will materially weaken us; they will cause every act of your government to be viewed with a jealousy and suspicion to which they would not otherwise have been exposed.

I rely, therefore, upon your assurance that you will not give Mr. Wakefield any public appointment whatever, that his name will not appear in any public documents; and that you will not put forward Mr. Turton in any more prominent situation, or place him in any other

[1] Gibbon Wakefield was the hero of the celebrated 'Wakefield abduction case,' for which delinquency he was imprisoned for three years in Newgate. During his imprisonment he wrote the marvellously vivid description of prison life entitled, *The Punishment of Death in the Metropolis*, and the more celebrated *Letters from Sydney*, in which he advocated the Wakefield system of colonisation. Subsequently to his liberation he was an active promoter of the South Australian Association and the New Zealand Company.

post of trust or dignity. Let his name be seen as little as possible, and let Mr. Buller continue to sign all your public acts.[1] Only consider how you injure your own private character by the association of such men with yourself and your family. Only consider how you injure the Queen, whose age and character demand some respect and reverence. Only consider what topics you furnish to your adversaries. The real insignificance of these difficulties, if indeed they be insignificant, and the ease with which they might have been avoided, only render them the more annoying and provoking, especially when we consider the magnitude of the consequences which may flow from them. I should wish, but cannot hope, to have to write no more about them. I should wish to turn to the more gratifying subject of the general measures which you have taken, of the general aspect of affairs, upon which, as well as upon your representations with respect to military and naval force, I will give you my notions in a day or two.

Soon afterwards arrived the intelligence of the issue of Lord Durham's celebrated Ordinance, by which eight Canadians were transported to Bermuda, and Papineau and fourteen others, who had fled the colony, were sentenced to death in case of their return. The result was, that Lord Brougham forced upon the Government an Act declaring the true meaning and intent of the Canada Act, and Ministers were compelled to disallow the Ordinance.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Durham. Private. South Street, August 19, 1838.

I OUGHT to have written to you before, but the turmoil and difficulty of the close of the session of Parliament have been so great that I have not had time to write as fully and largely as the importance of the matters demanded. I have been the less concerned at the delay, because I

[1] The appointment of Charles Buller was, of course, perfectly unexceptionable.

felt certain that upon a matter of such magnitude and consequence you would be sure not to act with anything like hastiness and precipitation. I am confident that you are too sensible of the importance of the interests which are committed to your care, and too well aware of the real nature of the form of government under which you are acting, not to be aware that coolness, patience, and endurance are perhaps the most essential amongst the various qualities which are required for the due discharge of the task which you have undertaken.

You are, of course, by this time acquainted with all that has taken place in Parliament. We have supported you with all our might, but we laboured under great disadvantages from the very scanty and insufficient information which you had afforded us, whilst our opponents were naturally in possession of the fullest and most authentic intelligence. With respect to the prisoners sent to Bermuda, you never transmitted to us any copy of their plea of guilty, or of their confession, nor any statement of the circumstances which had led to its being made; whilst of course the prisoners themselves had furnished Roebuck[1] with all these particulars, which were immediately conveyed to Brougham.

With respect to Mr. Papineau, and those in the same class with him, you could not [fail to] be sensible how much you were exceeding all former precedents in attainting them at once in case they returned, without giving them any notice or any opportunity of coming in and being heard in their defence. You never called our attention to this great difference, or put us in possession of the special reasons which you must have had for

[1] Mr. Roebuck was the paid agent of the Canadians.

proceeding in a manner so unusual and so certain to be productive of much observation and censure.

I have no doubt that you were substantially right in your manner of composing the Special Council, but you cannot be surprised that it should be made the subject of much animadversion by your and our enemies and opponents.[1]

It would have been well if in such matters as bills of attainder and bills of pains and penalties you had furnished us with exact minutes of the proceedings, so that we might have been able to show that all was regular and according to form.

The editor of the *Westminster Review*, a gentleman of the name, I believe, of Robertson, communicated to me a letter addressed to himself from Mr. Buller, which he afterwards thought proper to publish in the *Morning Chronicle*. I mention the fact as I am going to observe that, in my opinion, those who are in your suite and in your employment ought to be cautioned against writing letters home respecting the course and policy of your government. This is the ordinary precaution taken by every mission, and the consequence of the contrary line is that the town teems with letters to editors of newspapers and reviews, who have the most authentic intelligence of what is passing in Canada, whilst the Government is left in absolute ignorance.

I think it right to mention these matters clearly and distinctly. I know that you have much to do, probably more, much more, than any individual strength can perform; but you can command assistance, and I am sure that you will perceive and admit the necessity of keeping us accurately and minutely informed with

[1] Lord Durham had dismissed his predecessor's Council, and appointed a Special Council of five, selected from his personal following.

respect to everything that passes. You must have expected that the exercise of powers which were considered to be so large would be watched with the utmost jealousy and commented upon with the extreme of severity, and that there were persons in this country whom neither patriotism nor discretion would restrain from indulging in the utmost latitude of invective. The only safety lies in strict observance of the powers, in adhering to forms as well as to principles, and, if you are obliged to deviate from either, in making apparent the grounds and reasons for such deviation.

I feel certain that you will not only forgive but approve the freedom with which I have written, and that the untoward circumstances which have taken place, although they may render your course more difficult, will only encourage you to persevere in it until you have accomplished the object of your mission.

Ministers at first imagined that Lord Durham would submit to the censure passed on his proceedings in Parliament; but Lord Melbourne was of a different opinion.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. South Street, August 25, 1838.

I SHALL be either here or at Windsor or at Brocket or at Panshanger. If you will let me know exactly when you mean to leave Ryde, and when you mean to go to Ireland, I will arrange about meeting you. . . .

Durham will either throw up at once, or he will hurry his measures very much, which indeed he was otherwise inclined to do, and then insist upon coming home immediately. He will concoct a general arrangement by the end of October, send it home, follow it himself, boast of the effect he produced while there, and if it is thrown out will afterwards say it is all owing to the manner in which he has been treated; in saying

which he will have a good deal of colour, if not of truth.

It rains again to-day. Herat is bad, Belgium is bad,[1] the Precursor Association is not good, many other things are unsatisfactory, but this rain is the worst of all. Adieu.

Later on came Lord Durham's despatches, announcing his intention of resigning; and soon afterwards Ministers must have been acquainted with his angry proclamation of October 9, in which he appealed from the Government at home to the Canadian people.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Downing Street, October 19, 1838.

UPON receiving the news yesterday I determined upon coming up to see Glenelg and those who were in London. Durham's despatches are very long, in parts very able, putting forward all that makes for him and nothing that makes against him; very artful, and require to be very carefully read and considered. They are not an immediate resignation, but they express a determination to resign as soon as he has completed the enquiries in which he is engaged and has arranged his plan.[2] This is rather an odd course; but as he has declared his intention to the deputies of the other provinces, I do not see how he can well depart from it. I have seen Glenelg with Rice this morning, and have settled that he should only at present acknowledge the receipt of the despatches, and say that he trusts, as his resignation is not immediate, that he may be induced by further consideration of the subject not to persevere in

[1] Owing to the obstinacy of the King of Holland, the Belgian difficulty still remained unsettled.

[2] It was really Charles Buller's plan, embodying the opinions of Mr. Gibbon Wakefield and Sir William Molesworth. The *Report on the Administration of Canada* forms the charter of colonial liberties.

his determination of resigning. I have desired Glenelg to get the despatches copied as soon as possible. It is impossible to form a judgment upon them without a careful perusal.

Newport is better, so that there is little breathing time. Normanby's letter is a complete declaration of a want of confidence and of the necessity of a change in almost every department. Of those you mention who are for reconstruction Duncannon and Lansdowne are both fit, but I doubt whether Thomson would be satisfied with a change which did not considerably advance C. P. Thomson, certainly not with one that did advance Rice.

The first step towards a change would be to ascertain whether Glenelg would accept Newport's place; but I do not like to stir such a question whilst he has all this public business to transact and is at the same time suffering under private calamity.[1]

P.S.—Letters have come from Colborne accepting the command. You mean, I suppose, that Colborne should be invested with all the powers that Durham had.

The same to the same. South Street, October 21, 1838.

It is very odd to me the terror that Durham inspires. Everybody has always been afraid of him. They seem to me to fear him much more than they do Brougham. Now, for myself, if I was told that I was to-morrow to stand up in the prize-ring against Cribb or Gully, I should be rather alarmed.[2] But I should not feel the same if

[1] The death of his brother, Sir Robert Grant. Sir John Newport was Auditor of the Exchequer. Lord Glenelg declined to accept the appointment, and retired from office in the following year (see the previous chapter).

[2] Tom Cribb, the hero of the celebrated fights with the black, Molineaux, in 1810 and 1811, died in 1848. Gully, ex-prizefighter and ex-

I was threatened with a set-to with Luttrell or old Rogers.

The same to the same. South Street, October 26, 1838.

GEORGE GREY[1] has just been here with the despatch, in which he has inserted all your proposed matter, and it has certainly much improved it. Morpeth writes in the same tone as Normanby, that he hopes there will be no truckling to Durham. Now Durham has so run at me in those letters of his, and I dislike him so much, that there is no course would please me so well as setting him at defiance; but when I consider the state of the colony, and the feeling of the English party now rallying round him, and when I recollect that I am accused of not having supported him, I feel it to be absolutely necessary that we should do nothing to prevent his remaining or to facilitate his coming away. If we were merely to accept his resignation and appoint a successor it would be said, 'This was your intention from the beginning, and all you have done has been in order to carry it into effect.' I so much like Normanby's readiness to undertake Canada, that I am loath to make any sarcastic observation upon it; but the fact is that he is most anxious to get away from Ireland, and Morpeth not unwilling that he should go. I have, by-the-bye, this morning received a letter from Breadalbane offering to undertake Canada. I was pleased with it, as I like to see persons of that station ready to undertake such a public service, and I have written to him to that effect, that his offer was most honourable to himself, and that it would be considered.

bookmaker, was elected member for Pontefract in 1832. It is hardly necessary to say that Lord Melbourne must have had numerous sets-to with Luttrell and Rogers at Holland House.

[1] The Under-Secretary for the Colonies.

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Poulett Thomson. Windsor Castle, October 30, 1838.

MANY thanks for your letter. Unnecessary letters are a nuisance, but in matters of consequence it is very material to be informed of the opinions which are held. Whether Durham's resignation was right or wrong is a question which may be viewed in different lights, and upon which there may fairly be much difference of opinion. His provocation was great, and though I think he brought it upon himself by his rash and imprudent manner of doing things in themselves right, it required much patience and forbearance to submit to it. I agree with you that in itself it does not make much difference; he will still do all that he ever proposed to do, and then return home. But I cannot, therefore, view it as an event of small importance. Whatever may be the fact, his stay in the province will be considered as having been violently curtailed and abridged, and all the failures that may take place, and all the evils that will happen, will be attributed to his departure. He had made large promises, all of which, he will now say, he should certainly have fulfilled if he had been permitted to remain. The English party, who were discontented with him, now possess entire confidence in him. All these considerations seem to me to render it expedient that we should do nothing to hasten or facilitate his coming away, but that we should, as we have done, express a wish that he would reconsider his determination and remain. You may call this submission to his insolence; but it is not much submission when you in fact say, 'You have put yourself in a foolish passion and acted rashly; do think better of it, and retract your declaration.' Whether he can or will do this is another matter; but surely we, by offering it, keep ourselves in the right both with him and with the country.

His declaration of his intended resignation and of the grounds of it, and yet his continuing to act for a certain period, is a great inconsistency into which he has fallen. His consenting for a moment to serve a Government which he so loudly condemns is surely the best refutation of that condemnation.

If he remains in compliance with addresses and the requests of public meetings I am sensible that it will be liable to the observation, that he is there, Governor of Canada, rather by the direction of the British Canadians than by the appointment of the Queen. But this, though not without weight, does not appear to me sufficient to counterbalance other considerations.

Though it has been mentioned in despatches, the matter of Turton does not appear to me to be proper for a despatch. I would rather make the explanation in debate, and I would rather have it appear that I was forced to make the explanation than that I voluntarily entered upon it. Hobhouse and Stanley will be named in that business. None of it passed officially or with the Secretary of State. All passed verbally with me. There will, of course, be conflicting statements. It is a question which, in fact, ought not to be discussed, and I should wish to appear to avoid it as long as possible. It was settled to all practical purposes; and in his last despatches he argues that it had not at all injured his authority in the colony, although in his former letters he asserted that it had totally destroyed it.

With respect to his other complaints against the Government—or rather against me, because he has written to John Russell a full absolution and remission; in order to do this he must, of course, put his resignation upon the weakness of my defence in the House of Lords, and not upon the disallowance of the Ordinance, because

to that we were all parties—but with respect to his other complaints, I rather agree with you that a despatch should be drawn up in reply to them.

From Mr. Ellice to Lord Melbourne.

WELL, has not this meteor finished his career in the blaze I always predicted? What a proclamation—and if I am not mistaken in one important, the only important, point in it—in defiance of his instructions![1] At least so I understood, that you had directed the case of the prisoners, and of other persons affected by the disallowed Ordinance, should be considered as if no such Ordinance had passed, and that they should be treated still as exceptions to the amnesty. At the same time, I must confess I thought the abandonment of the Ordinance would lead to this result.

That you may see in what light the only one of '*my* measures' which has been published—a Registration Bill—was considered by the country I enclose my agent's letter; a very reasonable and sensible man. The assumption that his Excellency and his Cabinet are the only people who could take a right view of the difficulties and wants of the country is very well illustrated by this proof of their exclusive capacity to legislate for it. There were other heads and men of great experience who might have been applied to to frame these laws, who might have done it without exposing themselves to the blunders necessarily committed by men who had neither local experience nor any other qualification than a *smattering* of English law to qualify them to deal with the conflicting principles of the feudal system and our

[1] Lord Durham's proclamation resulted in his official recall. But he anticipated the Ministry, and left Quebec on November 1. Mr. Ellice was connected with the Canadian fur trade, whence his name 'the Bear.'

laws affecting real estate; and so it would have been with the rest of 'my measures.' You have seen already in the *Globe* the outline of their federal constitution. It was no sooner broached than his Excellency was obliged to abandon his provision about the Councils; and, as if to condemn the whole, the meeting called at Montreal to address him came to a unanimous resolution in favour of the absolute union of the two provinces—a measure which, as I quite suggested it years ago, I cannot be supposed to be opposed to in principle, although I fear that, without time and preparation, it might be found both unjust and unpracticable. However, that must be considered again, with other propositions; and if Howick cannot find any one to which no objection will apply, I shall despair of any other result than a separation of these colonies from the mother country.

Lord Durham reached Plymouth on November 26. On December 1 came the intelligence of the renewal of the rebellion; on the 3rd, of its suppression.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Downing Street, December 3, 1838.

EVENTS come quick. Despatches from Sir John Colborne of the 12th announce the speedy and complete suppression of the insurrection in Lower Canada, and his opinion that the province will remain tranquil during the winter. The British turned out with the greatest alacrity; the Volunteers beat the French whenever they met them, and the whole were entirely dispersed. Sir John says that the whole had been announced and the oaths administered in June and July; so there ends the notion of what passed here having anything to do with it, which indeed was before quite inconsistent with dates. . . .

The same to the same. December 4, 1838.

I STAYED in town to-day because I thought that Durham would arrive, and thought it best to be here when he did; but I now learn from the Admiralty that he will not come until Thursday or Friday. I shall therefore go back to Windsor to-morrow. This delay on the part of Durham appears rather strange, considering that he left Canada in such haste in order to give the Government information; but I suppose he will say that his news was of the intended rebellion, which, together with its suppression, outstripped him, and rendered his intelligence of no value. It is certainly an awkward thing, his coming away being so closely contemporaneous with the outbreak: he sailed the 1st or the 3rd; martial law was proclaimed on the 4th. This is rather close and looks ill, but I do not see what he could have done by staying. He would only have been an embarrassment. About the other matters—prisoners, &c.—I think we were right, and that it was impossible to constitute a new tribunal for the trial of them.[1] I do not myself at all wish to press upon Durham, and would do anything to help him short of appearing to court and truckle.

On his return Lord Durham at first refused all communication with the Ministry.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Downing Street, December 8, 1838.

STANLEY[2] has seen Durham this morning. He found him calm and quiet enough, but much vexed and hurt at the last despatch disapproving his proclamation, and particularly at its expressing the Queen's disapprobation,

[1] Twelve Canadian prisoners were brought up on *habeas corpus* before Lord Denman and the Court of Queen's Bench. The Court upheld their committal.

[2] This is 'Ben' Stanley, afterwards Lord Stanley of Alderley. He was now Secretary to the Treasury, and the most adroit of whips.

which he says is very marked and unusual. He said he should write a reply to it, and in that reply inform Lord Glenelg that when he received from North America the whole of the information, which he had left Charles Buller to collect and digest, he should lay it before the Government. He expressed no animosity or resentment against anyone, but said that he thought the Government had acted towards him with ill-will, and that he had been made an object of persecution. Glenelg is of opinion, and I agree with him, that, notwithstanding this knowledge of his intentions, we should still, as he has now been nearly ten days in the country without making any communication to the Government, send the letter which we agreed upon at the Cabinet yesterday, and which has been drawn up in very moderate and proper terms.

The Canada news is very favourable, and the proclamation of the American President highly satisfactory.[1] I shall go back to Windsor to-morrow.

P.S.—Since I wrote the above Glenelg has received a letter from Durham tendering formally his resignation, and adding that his full report upon the affairs of Canada must necessarily be delayed until the gentlemen connected with his mission return from Canada, from whence they may be very soon expected, as they were to leave Quebec on November 20. I think Glenelg should write to ask whether he has no information of importance to give.

The same to the same. Windsor Castle, December 11, 1838.

I RETURN you Tavistock's and Charles Greville's with many thanks. I have desired Glenelg to send you the letter which he has received from Durham, and his answer. People do not very

[1] A proclamation of neutrality issued by President Van Buren.

often do what one desires them of this kind, but perhaps he may. I do not see that we can do more, nor how we can have any personal communication with him if he declines it. Charles's opinion of Durham, both as to the manner in which he has been dealt with and in which he ought to be dealt with, is exactly mine.[1] I have always said that there had been a deference to him and attention to him, neither of which could I understand or participate.

Charles Greville's language about Canada and the sword and all that would not only be impolitic to use, but it is too strong in itself. We accustom ourselves in speaking of one another and of measures to employ such unmeasured and exaggerated terms, that we not only pervert and confuse our language, but our notions, ideas, and perceptions. Witness Durham saying that he went out with *despotic* powers; despotic meaning the absolute power possessed by a master over a slave in the times of untempered, unmitigated slavery. What is true is, that we can never suffer the French to govern or to have much influence in Canada again, and they being the majority in Lower Canada, this will make it difficult to establish anything like a popular government.

P.S.—I have this moment received a letter from the Duke of Richmond,[2] which says, 'Be steady, be very firm with your ex-Governor, or there will be the devil to pay.' I agree with the advice, though I do not exactly see what he apprehends.

By the way, I think it rather hard to charge upon Mr. Pitt the Corn Bill of 1815.

[1] Mr. Greville's views are reproduced in his *Journal*, notably under the date December 10.

[2] The Duke of Richmond, who had been a member of Lord Grey's Cabinet, was now a cross-bencher.

The same to the same. Downing Street, December 19, 1838.

We must begin to think seriously what we shall do about Canada. We shall be pressed upon this the moment Parliament meets. Ellice says that there must be no further delay, and that if we do not propose a plan he will propose one himself. Many, I suspect, will be of his opinion that a decisive step ought now to be adopted. I do not expect much from Durham's suggestions. I understand now that he himself says that he has no plan to propose, and if he only gives us general observations he will not advance us much upon our journey.

There is nothing here but gossip and rumour and chuchotage about Durham and amongst those who resort to him. Duncannon wrote to ask to see him. He replied that he could have no communication with any member of a Cabinet which had used him so scandalously. Stephenson has been to the Chancellor, and after beating a good deal about the bush he at length stated the real object of his coming, which was to suggest whether some agreement could not be come to between Durham and the Government before the meeting of Parliament; that by such an agreement much unpleasant discussion might be prevented; that Lord Grey, who had thought him previously ill-used, had in the most unqualified manner disapproved of his proclamation; that Lord Durham would make no overture himself, but that upon the whole he thought that he would not be indisposed to communicate with Lord John Russell. The Chancellor prudently made no answer, but reported the conversation to me. Do you think that there would be any objection to the Chancellor asking Stephenson whether he was certain that if you made a step towards him it would be civilly received, and not

rejected in the same manner as Duncannon's advance had been? What say you to this?

The same to the same. South Street, December 23, 1838.

I SHOULD like to know what you think about Canada. My own opinion is that the only course is to continue the further suspension of the constitution in Lower Canada, and to leave the other provinces as they are. It is laid down by all as a fundamental principle that the French must not be reinstated in power in Lower Canada; but there appear to me insuperable difficulties in the way of carrying this into effect if you are to give a new constitution to Lower Canada, or to unite Upper and Lower Canada, or to form a federation of all the North American provinces. In any of these cases you must give its due weight to the French population, according to its numbers. Swamping them, or any devices by which the real power is given to a minority, will not do in these days. Adieu.

The resignation of Lord Glenelg and the transference of his successor, Lord Normanby, to the Home Office were followed by the placing of the Colonial Office under the firm guidance of Lord John Russell. After Lord Spencer and Lord Clarendon had declined to go to Canada Mr. Poulett Thomson accepted the difficult post, and the great work of the creation of the Dominion, with which his name is inseparably connected, was begun.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Panshanger, April 2, 1839.

WE are about to make a legislative union of the two provinces. We feel that we cannot impose this union upon Upper Canada without her consent, and therefore we give her a choice. We give Lower Canada no choice, but we impose it upon her during the suspension of her constitution. This is a great difference and a great inequality, and will produce dissatisfaction. But all in both pro-

vinces who are for a union are for such a union as shall deprive the French Canadians of all weight and influence by disfranchising the rebellious districts, or by some penal and exclusive measure of that character. If we pass the Union without such an accompaniment, and in such a manner which gives the French any power or weight in the representative assembly, we shall not have a man for it in either province; and what are we to do then? We shall not be able to persevere in our measure; and how are we to recede from it?

The Union was carried during this session; but it was only by the exercise of great administrative skill that Mr. Thomson (created Lord Sydenham in 1840) was able to bear down opposition.

Lord Melbourne to Mr. Poulett Thomson. Downing Street, November 26, 1839.

I AM very much obliged to you for your letter. I never thought anything of the clamour which was raised, nor did I ever expect that it would have much effect in Canada. The Canadians cannot be so stupid and ignorant as they were represented to be by their worthy friends and correspondents here.

The time for operations is, as you say, very short. Speed and expedition are highly desirable, if not absolutely necessary, but still I strongly caution you against buttering (?) over your business imperfectly, as Durham did, for the purpose of finishing, or rather of appearing to finish it. ... .

I have this day seen your letter to John Russell, by which I am glad to perceive that you go on well and are in good spirits, though beset with difficulties and not very well provided with the means of overcoming them.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. December 28, 1839.

I RETURN you Thomson's letter. It is not encouraging in its details, and it is desponding in its tone. What I do not like is his saying that, if he fails in the Union, all is up. For God's sake tell him not to feel that, but to make the next best arrangement. If he suffers all 'to be up' in his hands, all will be up with him and with those who sent him too.

On December 12, 1839, Mr. Thomson wrote a long letter to Lord Melbourne describing his difficulties. He could not depend on his Ministers, and in the House of Assembly there was not a single leader who could command a dozen votes on any subject.

Mr. Poulett Thomson to Lord Melbourne.

THE Government is in a state which passes all belief. With a vast deal of patronage, and with the people not merely greedy of place, but attaching extraordinary and undue importance to the least demonstration of Government power, it is utterly powerless. It can scarcely command two votes in the Assembly or the Council; nay, worse, its own officers vote against it daily. It has never taken the slightest lead in the introduction of measures of legislation, or attempted to guide the proceedings of Parliament; the result is that the Assembly has usurped many of the rights of the Crown, that the most disgusting jobbery has prevailed, the finances have been ruined, and not a single measure really beneficial to the province generally has been carried through. The departmental administration is, if possible, worse still. There is no system, no control. The public offices are most of them defaulters, and the business in the utmost confusion.

It will take time to remedy all this, but the Union will afford the opportunity, because the whole system, both Parliamentary and departmental, must then be

broken up and remodelled; and if for no other purpose than that the Union would be most desirable. But it is so on many other grounds; and from what I see in both provinces I am satisfied that if we fail in carrying it you may as well give up the Canadas at once, for I know no other means of governing either. With it I believe that you have still a fair chance of keeping them for a considerable time, and of their being valuable to you; and every year that they remain under you, if they are properly governed, will make them less willing to join the American Union and more monarchical. For some time to come, however, you will not be able to withdraw a soldier. Nothing but the presence of so large a force keeps the Yankees in check, and it must at the least be kept up, if not increased. So Baring must not calculate on any reduction for regulars on this side of the Atlantic. In the Militia and Volunteers, however, I hope that a great saving may be effected. The demoralisation of the people by the use of this force is terrible, and it will be long before the effects of all this soldiering without discipline upon the habits of the rural population ceases to be felt, apart from the expense, which is about twice as much as regular troops.

I am ashamed of writing you so long a story, but you may like to hear how I find matters.

P.S.—December 15, 1839.—I opened my letter to tell you that the Legislative Council has voted resolutions in answer to the message agreeing to everything! I send them and an account of the proceedings to Lord John. The Assembly will give me infinite trouble. They have done nothing yet. But I hope you will be satisfied that I have not misspent my time here.

However, before his great administration came to a close Lord Sydenham wrote in a very different strain :—

Lord Sydenham to Lord Melbourne. Private. Government House, Kingston, June 27, 1841.

I HAVE not written to you for a long time; however, Lord John will have communicated to you anything which was of interest in my proceedings here, and I dare say you are of opinion that the best governor is one who gives the least occasion for his name or his acts coming before the public in England. On that score I hope you will have been satisfied both with my performances and my silence. If Parliament is still sitting you will, however, hear the word mentioned again, *à propos* of my declarations about the financial assistance you promised us, and, therefore, it may be satisfactory to you to know that the first test of the Union Act has more than answered my expectations. I always considered the first start of the United Parliament as the touchstone of the plan. The entire want of acquaintance with each other's feelings, character, political history, or state of parties which prevails with the inhabitants of Lower and Upper Canada respectively always made one feel that the opening was the crisis of the great work, if not as regarded its success ultimately, at least as concerned what must be one great element of success even then—the opinion which would be formed in England, where people look only to the great features of any colonial case. I have therefore been very nervous upon this point, and the more so as I found that within the last month an attempt was making to throw everything into confusion, and at least ensure a stormy opening. My officers (Ministers !), though the best men, I believe, for their departments that I could find, even if it had been in my power to choose them, were, unfortunately, many of them unpopular from

their previous conduct, and none of them have the most remote idea of the manner in which a government *through* Parliament should be conducted. So they could not render me any assistance, and, indeed, were rather a clog than not. I have, therefore, had to fight the whole battle myself, and it has been a considerable pull both to one's adroitness and temper. The result, however, has been the most complete success. I have got the large majority of the House ready to go through fire and water with me, and, what is better, thoroughly convinced that their constituents—so far as the whole of Upper Canada and all the British part of Lower Canada are concerned—will never forgive them if they do not. We have had discussed all the great topics—the Union, responsible government, every subject on which excitement might have been raised, and the agitators have entirely and signally failed. Except the rump of the old House of Assembly of Lower Canada, and two or three Ults and Radicals who have gone with my Solicitor-General, whom I have got rid of, every member is cordially with me and my government. Thus we shall go quietly to work at the measures of improvement which I have proposed, and we are sure of a peaceful and useful session. The government officers will have time to acquire practice in their new vocation. The English and French members will learn to understand each other's real views and opinions, and the result will only be to increase the majority which the government now has, and under the new system perfectly stable.

I am not, therefore, over-sanguine in assuring you that the *experimentum crucis* is over and has entirely triumphed. If you send a good man—not a soldier, but a statesman—to take my place when I am obliged

to retire at the end of the session, he will have but little trouble, for everything will be in grooves, running of itself, and only requiring general direction.[1]

[1] Lord Elgin was Lord Sydenham's successor. Lord Sydenham died from the effects of a fall from his horse before he left Canada.

CHAPTER XIII

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1837–1841

THE commencement of the new reign was not marked by a new departure so far as foreign affairs were concerned. Assistance was still given to the constitutional party in Spain, and Lord Palmerston's attitude towards the autocratic powers, especially Russia, was one of coldness and suspicion.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, September 7, 1837.

I HAVE obtained a return of the military and naval force now serving upon the coasts of Spain, and here it is; but whatever the force may be it surely will never do to withdraw or materially diminish it now—and upon what ground or pretext can we do it? We cannot say that the cause of the Queen of Spain is flourishing and secure. We are not prepared, I presume, to give it its death blow by declaring that it is hopeless. If we say that we act because the Spaniards do not conduct their affairs well and prudently, that we have known a long time, that we knew when we began, and to complain of it now would be to dispirit Spain and to lose all the little advantage we may have obtained by the assistance we have given her. It might not be prudent to admit that the exertion is too much for us, and that we are so weak at home and in our colonies that we cannot spare the force. I see no ground that we can take that will not be injurious, dishonourable, and consequently

dangerous. You will ask whether we are to continue this expense for ever, or throughout the long struggle which may yet take place in Spain. To that I say that I agree with you in being unwilling to do any more than we have done, and I should certainly prefer seizing the first fair and safe opportunity of extricating ourselves altogether; but to withdraw at once now would be to hazard much future expense in the Peninsula, and to lower ourselves in the eyes of Europe by abandoning our own policy without any reason except that it had not been so successful as we anticipated. Our conduct would be attributed to its true cause—namely, our own increasing difficulties and our internal apprehensions—and would greatly encourage our enemies, who are the whole world, to press us for further sacrifices and concessions. I am aware of the state of the country—perhaps really more alarmed about it than many others—but I do not think this is the right way of meeting dangers.

In the following year, however, the British Legion was disbanded, and the civil war gradually came to an end.

The strained relations with Russia were the result of a long series of high-handed proceedings, chiefly at the expense of the Porte. During 1837 and 1838 war seemed possible if not probable, and, as usual, the agents of the Czar were particularly active in the countries adjacent to the Himalayas.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. September 26, 1838.

THE Persian business is serious, and may have serious consequences. The Persians assaulted Herat on July 28, and were repulsed with great slaughter. The assault was directed by Simonitch, the Russian ambassador. On the other hand, our Resident has been sent away from Cabul,[1] and both Cabul and Candahar have joined openly with the Per-

[1] Burnes left Cabul in April, finding that Dost Mohammed had passed completely under the influence of the Russian agent, Vicovitch.

sians, the latter having concluded a treaty with the Shah, under the guarantee of the Russian ambassador. This being the case, it is thought that the Shah, notwithstanding his repulse, will persevere in the siege of Herat. McNeill[1] has written to Auckland to press him to send more men to Herat, to the amount altogether of five thousand, and even to make a movement into the interior of Persia upon Ispahan and Teheran. It appears to me impossible to give directions from hence. It must be left to Auckland's judgment. But if he should follow McNeill's advice it may bring us into collision with Russia and Persia. . . .

Lord Auckland, acting on the advice of the military authorities in India, had already recommended that operations against Persia should be confined to the occupation of the island of Karak, and the defence of Herat was left to its garrison and the valour of Eldred Pottinger. It was determined instead to counteract the machinations of Russia by an expedition into Afghanistan, which was to restore Shah Sujah to the throne from which he had been deposed by Dost Mohammed. Disastrous as were the results of that determination, it was approved at the time by every military authority of repute, notably by the Duke of Wellington.

Lord Palmerston to Lord Melbourne. September 9, 1838.

THANK you for this;[2] it is a very sensible paper, and takes a good practical view of the matters in question. The result seems, on the whole, to be favourable to the course which Auckland is pursuing, and shows that the Persian Gulf is the place for a demonstration and diversion, but that Afghanistan is the quarter where our strength must be employed for real defence.

[1] Envoy Extraordinary to the Persian Court.

[2] Lord Palmerston's letter is endorsed 'On the Duke of Wellington's Memorandum on our relations with Persia.' The memorandum, however, has disappeared.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, October 13, 1838.

THERE is a good deal in Howick's letter, and I shall, of course, send it to Palmerston. He will be able to state facts with more certainty, but it is my impression that McNeill remonstrated with the Shah quite sufficiently to justify any measures which we have taken or may take. Howick's letter is not only well but, upon the whole, temperately reasoned, and I am inclined to agree with much of his general argument; but it will not do to rely upon argument against actual force, against the equipping of fleets and the hurry of armies. If we do we run the risk of being in the plight of that man who suffered flogging whilst his counsel was arguing that the court had no power to inflict that punishment upon him. McNeill went upon that sort of general reasoning when he told us the Persian army could not keep the field for so long a time before Herat, and you see the result. The course which Howick recommends as to the troops at Karak is exactly that which we have adopted; and though it appears to me necessary and tending to peace to make a remonstrance to Russia, I quite concur with Howick that that remonstrance ought not to be couched in a haughty or even an unfriendly tone, because Russia certainly may issue a counter-manifesto, the tone of this country, of the Parliament, and of the Government having been very hostile to her both with reference to Poland and to Circassia,[1] and some steps having been taken which, in my opinion, were uselessly irritating. With respect to interference in Afghanistan, Howick will differ, and what he says is plausible; but I am afraid

[1] Violent language had been used in the House of Commons about the occupation of Cracow and the affair of the *Vixen*, a British merchantman which had been seized by the Russian authorities on the coast of Circassia.

his policy will not do in the least. If all Afghanistan becomes hostile how long will Runjeet Sing[1] remain friendly, and how long will the various nations within our own frontier remain quiet?

I agree with Howick in being very unwilling to lay down that there must be war between us and Russia, and even if I came to that conclusion I would, upon the whole, delay it as long as possible. But it will not do to rely rather upon her weakness than our own strength; nor can I by any means consider the Turkish and Polish campaigns a proof of that weakness. The Turks offered a most desperate resistance, a much more desperate one than I fear they will ever make to an attack again; and the Polish army is one of the best in Europe, and backed by the whole population of the country. Howick's policy is well, if we have time and temper for it, but it is a policy which is not within our power, and Russia may force us to depart from it at any moment.

The same to the same. Windsor Castle, November 14, 1838.

I HAVE desired Palmerston to send you the despatch which Pozzo has received from St. Petersburg. It is so important that you ought to see it, and it bears a good deal upon the latter and most important part of the paper which Tavistock sent me this morning, I mean the augmentation of the navy. The Russian despatch is evasive as to the past, and gives bad reasons and makes false excuses for the course they have taken; but for the present and future it is satisfactory. Its propositions are that Russia should engage by all means in her power to restrain the Shah of Persia from further aggression in Afghanistan; that we should retire westwards from Karak, and that hereafter we should act

[1] The founder of the Sikh power at Lahore.

together in concert at Teheran with a view to the preservation of the peace of Central Asia. All this is very well, and there cannot be any doubt that we ought to lose no time in closing with the proposal. At the same time the measures which have been taken by Russia have been so decidedly hostile, and have so evidently only been arrested and prevented by our firm language and decided attitude, that we could hardly venture to trust —if, indeed, we ever could have done so—either to her friendship or to her moderation. That Baltic fleet of hers is a most awkward feature in our present position.[1] It is such an armament as never existed in the world before. The ships are all ready, and the men can be put on board them at a day's notice. All other fleets—at least I believe so—require a considerable time before they can get their crews. It is impossible to consider the country safe whilst this force is so near. At the same time, to be always in a state of war preparation, if it be not as bad as war, is at least losing half the advantages of peace. I write you this on account of the importance of the matter. It does not require any immediate answer.

In the following year the high-handed proceedings of the Chinese authorities at Canton, especially their destruction of some 20,000 chests of opium belonging to British merchants, compelled us to declare war against the Celestial empire.

Lord Palmerston to Lord Melbourne. September 23, 1838.

THESE papers seem long, but are not so long as they look, and they require to be read.

The practical questions which arise out of them are:—

[1] It is remarkable how this Baltic fleet seems to have alarmed the authorities. There was a report in 1839 that it was intended for an attack on India, but the Duke of Wellington was, of opinion that its destination was the Mediterranean. (Torrens, ii. 281 *et seq.*)

1. Will the Government adopt or reject the responsibility undertaken by Captain Elliot in the name of the Government for the 20,000 chests of opium? [1]

2. If the Government rejects that responsibility, will it leave the suffering parties to their fate?

3. If the Government adopts the responsibility, will it simply propose to Parliament to make good the amount, or will the Government consider the engagement taken in its name by Captain Elliot as an engagement to compel the Chinese Government to make good to the parties the losses which they have sustained; founding the demand against the Chinese Government upon the outrageous nature of the proceedings resorted to by the High Commissioner Lin?

4. Will the Government, when it makes its demand for compensation to the persons whose property has been thus forcibly seized, accompany that demand by a further demand of a treaty placing the intercourse of British subjects with China on a footing of security for the future; and also by a demand of apology or reparation of some kind for the gross indignity put upon the officer of the British Crown by the whole tenor and character of these proceedings?

5. If such should be the determination of the Government, what are the coercive measures which can most easily and effectually be put in force to compel acquiescence on the part of the Chinese?

6. The measures hitherto suggested are a rigorous interruption of the coasting trade of China.

The seizure and detention of all their coasting vessels, said to be extremely numerous.

[1] Captain Elliot was our agent in China, and it was on his responsibility, and with the understanding that they would be repaid by Government, that the British merchants surrendered their opium to be destroyed by the High Commissioner Lin.

The seizure of some of the islands on the coast, including the town of Amoy, which is upon an island.

No very large naval force would be required for these purposes. Two sail of the line and some smaller vessels would be sufficient; and troops enough might, without difficulty, be sent from India.

There is one line-of-battle ship in India, and another and a large frigate are ready to go out, and might touch at Buenos Ayres on the way, to assist the negotiations going on there.

With a war with China on our hands we were in some danger of coming to blows with the United States, the most burning of the topics under dispute being the boundary question.

Lord Palmerston to Lord Melbourne. April 22, 1840.

THIS is the letter of a man[1] who does not know much about what is doing in the matter he writes about; who is very heartily frightened, as an American, at the idea of a war with England; and who thinks that the most advantageous way of avoiding war would be to persuade England to give up the whole matter in dispute. It would be easy upon this principle for any country to ensure peace to the latest day of its existence, though that day might not be very far off. I am, however, extremely incredulous as to the warlike disposition of the Americans as to the disputed territory. I know from several persons last year that they were in a very great fright at the idea that what the Maine people had done,[2] and what the Congress had said and voted, would produce acts of

[1] Jacob Harney, or Harvey, mentioned below.

[2] The State of Maine decided to include in its census some of the inhabitants of the disputed territory, and the authorities of New Brunswick promptly arrested the returning officer, Ebenezer Greely. He was released by the Canadians out of gratitude for the strict neutrality observed by the State of Maine during the Canadian rebellion.

resentment here; and when the steamer came out and brought them *no news* they felt like culprits reprieved. They are now bankrupts from one end of the Union to the other, and are in no condition to volunteer an unnecessary war.

Mr. Jacob Harney may think that we are losing time by collecting information in support of our claim, and I believe most of the Americans think that this is a labour they would as lief we had not taken; but it was a step absolutely necessary as a foundation for any further proceeding, and it will turn out to have been a great advantage to us. All this, however, is no reason for unnecessary delay; but I did not get the report of the Surveying Commission till Saturday night; I spent the whole of Sunday in going through it with Fetherstonhaugh, and I have ordered it to be printed for the Cabinet, and I think it ought to be laid before Parliament and to be communicated to the American Government.

It quite knocks over the American claim, and I think it sets up ours; and surely if the unanimity of the Americans in favour of their own claim is founded, as Jacob Harney, the New York Quaker, says, upon a universal belief that their claim is just, one way of breaking up that unanimity must necessarily be to show them that their claim is erroneous.

Meanwhile, the long-expected crisis in the East had occurred. On June 24, 1839, the Turkish army was utterly defeated at Nezib; on the 29th the Sultan Mahmoud died, not without suspicions of assassination, and the Turkish Admiral sailed off with his fleet and handed it over to Mehemet Ali. It was evident that, unless the Powers intervened, the empire was on the edge of dissolution. As soon, however, as the subject of intervention was broached the French hung back and made difficulties of every sort. Lord Palmerston promptly resolved to proceed

without them, and on July 15, 1840, the Quadrilateral Treaty for the protection of the Porte was concluded between Austria, England, Prussia, and Russia, on the one side, and Turkey on the other.

During the ensuing months the condition of affairs was extremely grave. We seemed to be on the brink of a war with France; nor, with the exception of Russia, were we sure of our allies. The Cabinet was of divided opinions. Lord Holland, true to the Whig traditions, clung to the French alliance, a policy in which he was supported by the Whig Mentor, Mr. Ellice, and it was not long before they received the powerful support of Lord John Russell and Lord Clarendon. Under the circumstances Lord Melbourne's course of action was full of anxieties, and the 'Greville Memoirs' contain a highly coloured description of his doubt and despondency. But Greville's opinion is that of a strong partisan. Lord Palmerston, writing on October 8, said: 'I have heard, in a way that induces me to believe it, that Charles Greville is bestirring himself with some activity on behalf of the Thiers and Ellice cabal.' As a matter of fact, Lord Melbourne, though fully alive to the dangers of the situation, seems to have taken the correct measure of the resistance that Louis Philippe was prepared to offer, and to have shaped his course accordingly, keeping the Cabinet together, and giving the Foreign Secretary a free hand.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, August 19, 1840.

I RECEIVED your note yesterday and showed it to Palmerston. I send you what he says upon the subject. Difference of views necessarily leads to different conclusions. But you must lay to your account the great violence and imprudence both of the English and French press, and the irritation consequent thereon. Affairs look awkward. Leopold showed me the letter of the King of the French, which is in the tone of a man much hurt, and very sore, and also much puzzled, perplexed, and annoyed with his situation. He expresses himself with great reserve, and leaves it open to himself to take any course hereafter. Guizot came here yesterday. He will see both

Leopold and Palmerston to-day, and I shall hear from both what he says, and the tone in which he speaks. Much will depend upon this.

The Duke of Wellington came on Sunday and went yesterday. He was in high good humour. I saw him yesterday morning, and he conversed with me very frankly. He said that our policy was right—that it was our business to maintain the Porte—that he had himself suggested that we should do so—that the terms offered to Mehemet Ali were reasonable—that he himself thought that he ought to be confined to Egypt and have no part of Syria, so as hereafter to possess the power of invading the whole. But he added that the present situation, occasioned by the tone and armaments of France, was most critical and dangerous—that nobody could anticipate what would be the consequences of a war—that every effort ought to be made to avoid it—that the peace of Europe never could be safe while France was out of the alliance of the Great Powers—that every effort should be made to get her again into action with us, and that the only measure he could think of for this purpose was a general treaty for the establishment of the Porte on the principle of keeping the straits *mare clausum*, and for maintaining the Porte in sufficient power and strength as guardian of that principle. He says he is convinced that France was not deceived, but that he [Louis Philippe] had not sufficient *official* information of what was going on, and of that he had taken advantage.

All that he says is very well about getting France again into harness; but how the devil is that to be done? The tone she has taken, and her armaments, will drive Mehemet to the rejection of our proposals. The means we have of carrying them into effect by force are quite

inadequate to that end. The Duke of course pressed, as he has always done now for two or three years, the insufficiency of our force.

Lord Palmerston to Lord Melbourne. August 18, 1840.

I own I do not agree with John Russell about the tone of the *Chronicle*, which seems to me to be judicious, and which I believe to have been very useful at Paris.[1]

If the French attempt to bully and intimidate us as they have done, the only way of meeting their menaces is by quietly telling them we are not afraid, and by showing them, first, that we are stronger than they are, and, secondly, that they have more vulnerable points than we have. I do not think that any comparison of forces which I have seen in the *Chronicle* is at all exaggerated, but on the contrary the statements which I have seen in that paper of the naval means of the two countries seem to be borne out by the French account which was published last week of the French navy, and by the statement which I saw in the *Globe* of Saturday of our own navy.

Guizot was told by me so long ago as July 17 what our immediate measures would be; but when people threaten you with armaments you cannot show them the instructions to your commanders in the same way you could to a co-operating ally.

There is a good letter from France to-day in the *Chronicle*, worth reading.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor

Guizot has been here. He was rather touchy and high, and like a man who thought himself called upon to support his dignity. He neither

[1] The *Morning Chronicle* was strongly Palmerstonian, and Lord Palmerston inspired some of its most trenchant articles, if he did not actually write them.

Castle, August 21, 1840. spoke to me nor Palmerston upon politics, and Palmerston did not like to begin with him, as he considered himself as having received from him the decision of the French Government upon the state of affairs, and thought it imprudent to act as if he supposed any change had been made by the conferences at the Château d'Eu.[1] Palmerston, however, will go up to London to-day, and has Guizot to dine with him, when probably some conversation will take place. Palmerston returns here to-morrow, and on Monday he will go to Tiverton until the end of the week. Granville and Bulwer write that the warlike feeling is still strong in Paris, and that Macaulay, who arrived from England strongly impressed with the notion that war was impossible, had a good deal changed his opinion.

Leopold goes on Monday.[2] He has been most anxious to devise some means of doing that which the Duke of Wellington suggests—viz. of merging our treaty in some larger transaction, to which France may be a party. Guizot and Thiers are both favourable to this, and so are Bulow and Neuman,[3] and it seems to me

[1] Guizot came over as ambassador in February. His impressions were freely recorded in his *Mémoires*, of part of which an English translation was published in 1862 under the title of *An Embassy to the Court of St. James's in* 1840. In it are to be found many interesting allusions to Lord Melbourne, whom Guizot considered 'a judicious epicurean, an agreeable egotist, gay without warmth, and mingling a natural air of authority with a carelessness which he took delight in proclaiming. "It is all the same to me," was his habitual expression.' Of his visit to Windsor he writes: 'During my stay I neither exchanged with Lord Palmerston nor Lord Melbourne a single word on politics; they addressed none to me; I neither uttered nor courted any. Lord Palmerston seemed a little subdued; Lord Melbourne, contrary to his habit, had a thoughtful air.' The conferences at the Château d'Eu, between Louis Philippe, Thiers, and Guizot, took place on August 11 and the two following days.

[2] The King of the Belgians was naturally alarmed at a possible war between his niece and his father-in-law.

[3] The Prussian and Austrian ambassadors.

the only way out of it, and Palmerston is not averse from it.

Our revenue is at present going on very ill. The falling off in the present quarter is, up to the 15th inst., more than half a million—nearly six hundred thousand pounds, notwithstanding our increased duties.

The Bishop of Chichester is dead. What are your notions about a successor? It puzzles me. Wrio,[1] who is here, is more determined against it than ever.

A comparison of the French and English fleets was not particularly reassuring.

Lord Minto to Lord Melbourne. Private. Admiralty, August 23, 1840.

I HAVE been thinking much and anxiously of the Mediterranean fleets, and I wish you to know how we stand in order that you may make up your mind as to the course we are to take. The French have at present fourteen ships of the line in the Mediterranean. We have twelve. They have four more in an advanced state of forwardness, two of which, it is supposed, may be ready for sea about a fortnight hence. We have two large ships—*Rodney* and *Vanguard*—which I hope may sail for the Mediterranean about the end of this week or early in the next. The numbers will then stand: French, sixteen; English, fourteen.

Before the end of September they will probably get two more of their ships to sea, and about the same time I should hope to have the *Britannia* and the *Calcutta* in the Mediterranean, which will bring the numbers to eighteen French and sixteen English; and here I am at the end of my present resources for at least a couple of months to come, or, at the very best, I cannot hope before that time to add more than one three-decker to

[1] Lord Wriothesley Russell, Lord John's half-brother.

the above-mentioned numbers. The French say that they intend to have twenty-five ships of the line at sea. In the meanwhile orders have actually been received in their dockyards to fit out five more (beyond the eighteen) with all possible expedition. This will undoubtedly require a considerable time, but how long must depend a good deal upon the success of their levies for the crews. At this point the French will have brought forward every serviceable ship they possess in the water, though they have many on the stocks ready or nearly ready for launching. My impression, however, is, that they will find the greatest difficulty in raising above twenty or two-and-twenty ships of the line actually at sea—a number which, with a little time, we could very easily double. But up to that point they must have the start of us, and with continually increasing advantage, if no corresponding exertions are made on our part to keep pace with their extraordinary efforts. Such of the French ships as have been some time at sea—probably about twelve sail of the line—are in very high order, and in all respects most efficient men-of-war. The French fleet is also generally composed of larger ships than ours, so that the relative strength of the two fleets is not exactly to be measured by the number of ships, though the difference in the force of the French and English ships is not nearly so great as is usually supposed. Our Mediterranean fleet is in the highest state of order and efficiency—well manned and well armed and well trained; but the ships have only got their peace complements.

With regard to the ships more recently commissioned on both sides, there can be no doubt that the advantage in point of efficiency must be greatly in our favour, the French conscripts being invariably raw hands,

unused to a man-of-war, and our crews being in the greater part composed of men-of-war's men and thoroughbred seamen.

Now, then, the question is, Will you be satisfied with the sixteen or seventeen sail of the line which I may be able to furnish with my present means, whilst the French are pressing forward the equipment of a superior force? or do you feel it to be necessary that we should take such measures as may establish our naval superiority? The difficulty here is one of men and money. At this season men are the most scarce, and we have nearly exhausted the supply of such as can be procured in the usual way and without incurring a good deal of expense. So that at best we cannot expect to recruit very rapidly, although we may, by extraordinary exertion, make considerable progress, such as would enable us to send our ships to sea more expeditiously as the season advances and more seamen come into the market.

But the ships we are already bringing forward will exhaust and more than exhaust our vote of seamen, as I think the ships in the Mediterranean must receive their war complements, and though this will be partly effected by an addition to their marines, it will require not much less than a thousand sailors to complete them. I am not at all afraid to overstep our vote a little for a time; but I mention these things to make you understand that, if we are to keep pace with the armament of France, it can only be done by measures which must lead to the assembling of Parliament in the course, probably, of five or six weeks; and I confess it to be my own opinion that we should not be justified in allowing France to obtain even a temporary superiority at sea. Indeed, I believe that our best chance of a continuance of peace will be in the greatness of our force in the Mediterranean.

When you have considered this question I should like to know your opinion, for it is one that does not admit of much delay in our decision.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, August 26, 1840

I RECEIVED your letter yesterday, and have sent it to Palmerston. Our position is most disquieting, and, from the inadequacy of our force to effect its objects, highly dangerous. I send you a very clear and distinct letter which I received yesterday from Minto upon this subject. I should not feel quite easy if we had only the Egyptian and Turkish fleets [1] to deal with, but if the French are combined with them we are evidently quite unequal to do anything, and may suffer disaster, which would be ruinous to us and most injurious to the country.

We might call in the assistance of the Russians; but that would be lowering, and if they were successful they would be masters of us as well as of others.

But how to get out of this with credit and safety I do not see. Mehemet Ali will not accept the offered terms. My opinion is that he would not have yielded to the five powers. He certainly will not to the four, particularly considering the tone and attitude which France has taken. If he were to yield it would settle the matter; but it is not to be expected. If he does not absolutely reject, but proposes counter-plans, and after hesitation, this would offer us a way out of it; and this appears to me the best chance that we have. If he breaks out into violence and aggressive measures it will bring matters at once to a crisis, and God knows what events may happen, or what they may produce. I do not, however, expect that this will happen, and I hope

[1] That is, the fleet which Achmet Pasha had handed over to the Egyptians.

it may not, as we are but ill prepared for it. If he remains in the attitude of passive resistance, he will puzzle us as to what step we shall take next. Whatever we propose to do France will object to, and then will come the question between us. We can hardly modify our terms, and France cannot join us to enforce them. If we modify our terms, Russia will immediately break off from us and resume her right of separate action, which our policy has been adopted in order to prevent. All this constitutes a most difficult complication. I have just got your note of the 24th. I do not think that Palmerston will concur in such a communication being made at present, and I am afraid that it would lead to no result, as France would certainly demand something for her accession, in order to justify and explain it to her people. She would ask some considerable modification of the terms; and this would at once leave Russia out of the alliance, which is as bad as leaving out France.

I feel a difficulty about appointing a dubious man, like Shuttleworth or Pearson, on account of the Chancellor, whose brother is such a sort of man and has been excluded on that ground.

The Chancellor has behaved about it admirably, as he always does; but he feels it, and I hate to annoy him. I incline very much to the Archdeacon of Lewes, the Rev. C. Julius Hare.[1] He is a great friend of Thirlwall's—translated Niebuhr with him, preached his consecration sermon—has lately published sermons against Pusey's leading doctrines, and is a most distinguished divine. He was appointed archdeacon by Bishop Otter, who had the highest opinion of him, and therefore he is acquainted with the diocese, which, as

[1] The brother of Augustus Hare, and the author of *Guesses at Truth*.

far as it goes, is an advantage. He was rather a violent Liberal, but it is supposed that his opinions have lately undergone some modification. I send you a letter which I have received from Lord Chichester respecting him. You may say it is running too much upon Trinity College, Cambridge; and so, perhaps, it is. But Trinity College produces ten able men when any other seminary produces one, and ought to have a proportionable share of appointments. Adieu.

I hope you are well. For myself, I can neither eat nor sleep for anxiety,[1] and I suffer much more from the pressure of responsibility during the recess than during the sitting of Parliament.

Wrio is most dogged and determined in his *Nolo episcopari*. He says he shall be more fit for it in two or three years. I suspect this to be with the hope of escaping it altogether.

Earl of Clarendon to Lord Melbourne. August 31, 1840.

I SAW Guizot yesterday; he was as sulky as ever with the policy which he says has put all Europe *à la merci des incidents et des subalternes*; but his language was pacific, though he declared that the preparations for war were *very real* and proceeding with all possible activity. Two things, he told me, had struck him much when he was in France the other day—one, the complete change of opinion among the *juste milieu* people and the capitalists of Paris (he appears to have met many of them at Eu and some other sea place where he went to join his family), who are, he says, indignant that, after all their efforts during the last ten years to maintain peace and the alliance between the two countries, the one should

[1] A phrase quoted by Greville. But the whole letter is not particularly alarmist.

be endangered and the other wantonly thrown over without a thought or a care for the danger of various kinds to which France would be exposed by such a course; and Guizot feels convinced that these people would be found to make sacrifices and vote supplies for war even more readily than those of the Gauche, who have been making the clamour. The next thing that struck him was the altered tone of the King, who said that for the first time since he had been upon the throne he foresaw the possibility of war, and that he was determined to be prepared for it in a manner suitable to the honour and power of France. Still, however, Guizot said that *le fond de la pensée du Roi* was Peace, and that he would only *accept war* when some act of the allies rendered it dangerous for him to brave public opinion, and therefore a matter of unavoidable necessity.

He said that the King's sentiments towards Thiers were unchanged; that he hates and mistrusts him as much as ever, but that he gives no countenance to the intrigues of Molé[1] and others against him, and is resolved not to quarrel with him unless Thiers insists prematurely upon driving him into war; in which case *il le brisera*, let the result be what it may.

Guizot, whose tone in speaking of Thiers was not friendly, said he had strongly advised the King to adhere to this course, but he does not think the case will arise; that Thiers is acting cautiously, and appears, as much as the King, to be alive to the embarrassment of his position, and not knowing how to do enough to satisfy public opinion without doing more than is con-

[1] A prominent politician, who had been First Minister from April 1837 to March 1839, and the author of some remarkable *Essais de Morale et de Politique*.

sistent with the preservation of peace, which both seem to have at heart.

Guizot read to me the whole of Périer's report to Thiers of his mission to Alexandria,[1] and I must say that the instructions of the French Government appear to have been little characterised by undue friendship towards the Pasha, and that the language used in support of them was as energetic as if the whole had emanated from our own Foreign Office. Périer writes, and admits he does so, under feelings of some irritation against Mehemet Ali, upon whom neither he nor Cochelet, the Consul-General, could make any impression; and his opinion was that Mehemet Ali's vanity was gratified in thinking that he, a simple pasha and the vassal of the Sultan, was able to defy the whole of Europe, and that as he had all his life been in the habit of risking everything for the object he had in view, and had never yet failed in attaining it, so Périer feels confident that on the present occasion he will pursue his accustomed system.

Guizot said he had learnt with extreme satisfaction from Palmerston (who had communicated it to him with a *franchise qu'il n'oublierait jamais*) the abandonment of the *commercial* blockade, as it was from that he most apprehended collision; though how the Convention, reduced to a *blocus militaire*, was to eject Ibrahim Pasha from Syria he said he was at a loss to conceive; but he added, if upon the Convention having become a dead letter some fresh arrangement is made to which France is no party, or if the English Government attempts a second insurrection in Syria, and furnishes arms to the

[1] Périer's and Walewski's missions seem to have been perfectly genuine, though according to Bulwer (*Palmerston*, vol. ii. p. 314) their object was to urge Mehemet Ali to violent courses.

insurgents and lands troops to assist them or to take possession of Candia, or a Russian army is permitted to enter Constantinople, that he knew a lamentable effect upon public opinion would be produced in France, and he should then think the prospect of maintaining peace extremely problematical.

Madame de Lieven [1] told me the Emperor was *plus que satisfait*; not that he cared anything about the Sultan or the Pasha, but that he had effectually broken up the alliance between England and France, which he detested.

Mr. E. Ellice to Lord Melbourne. September 16, 1840.

THEY may write and lie about me as they will, I feel it still my duty to do all in my power to prevent more mischief than is inevitable from the present crisis; and I, therefore, again beg your attention to the *Observer* newspaper, received to-day, of the 13th. Are some of our madmen really disposed to urge the violence of the old ruffian (as they call him), Mehemet Ali, and, seeing no other way out of the pass in which they have involved us, to force on a general conflagration and bury themselves in the ruins? Whether these articles are directly furnished to the *Observer*, or written by the inspiration of such parties, I know not; but I do know that Mr. Scanlan, the editor, is paid for them out of the money under your control from the Civil List secret service money, and you have it in your power either to moderate their tone or to stop the supplies. The 'insensate blustering of any

[1] The wife of the Russian diplomatist, Prince de Lieven. She played a prominent part in English society from 1812 to 1834, when the Lievens were recalled to St. Petersburg. After her husband's death, in 1836 or 1837, she established herself in Paris, where she became the Egeria of M. Guizot. She was ordered to leave France during the Crimean War, but her return was connived at, and she died in Paris in 1857 (*Greville*, vol. viii. chap. xiii.).

nation" can only still further irritate the people on the other side of the Channel, and the *true* observations in the article headed 'Peace or War,' on the state of society in Paris, would have suggested themselves with much greater advantage to some parties before they made up their minds to set the match to their elements of combustion. Louis Philippe and all his Ministers, past and present, required our assistance to keep the embers of other times and feelings asleep—not to ignite them.

It cannot be that men were or are so blind as to believe the causes to which they ascribe the resistance either of the French nation or of the French Ministers to this Eastern Treaty. Lord Granville surely has not kept you all so much in the dark with respect to public feeling in France, and the pledged opinions of all classes of politicians. You cannot have been so little aware of the detestation in which Russia was held in the country, from the conduct of the Emperor both to the Royal Family [1] and to the nation since the revolution of July, not to have expected the necessary consequences of your Anglo-Russian alliance! God knows what this escapade of the Foreign Office is to bring upon us, or whether we may still escape what we deserve from it; but let no man say we did not indulge in it with our eyes open. . . . In dealing with this case you have to deal with the nation—neither with the Court nor the Minister. I believe that any change will be worse for you; for if the direction of affairs went for a short interval into what would be called anti-national hands, there might be a very short respite before it got into revolutionary ones, and then, 'Stand by the sheets.'

[1] The Czar treated Louis Philippe as a usurper, and refused to address him as *Mon Frère*.

I have not the least doubt that those who have prompted these counsels are at this moment more than ever confident in the vigorous wisdom and successful result of them; and that I and others who saw in them only the beginning of evils, of which no man could predict the termination, are held in as great contempt as our opposition to them has been considered factious and unreasonable. It is clear that neither party can now have much influence, though both much the same, in the course matters may take; but it is the duty of both to avoid increasing 'the odds' apparently against a happy issue, and I, therefore, trouble you with this letter.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, September 16, 1840.

I HAVE received your note. I have not yet heard from Palmerston upon the subject of your proposals, which I sent to him; but I have no doubt that I shall very speedily.[1]

For heaven's sake do not be precipitate; consider this matter well.

You have been a consenting party to the Convention; you cannot, upon slight or subordinate grounds, withdraw yourself from the consequences of it.

Recollect the serious results which must arise from the breaking up of the Government now,—the certain failure of the policy, and an insuperable difficulty thrown in the way of any succeeding government.

If the British Government is broken up by the mere bluster and threats of the French, and by the sole apprehension of a difference with that country, what will be the impression, both upon Europe and upon France, of their strength and courage, of our weakness and humility?

[1] See the next letter.

It will encourage France to such a degree that, even if it staves off war now, it will produce it very shortly.

Lord Palmerston to Lord Melbourne. F. T., September 16, 1840.

I SEND you a note from Clarendon showing what some of the French really think about our treaty.

I saw yesterday a private letter from Paris, saying that Thiers now says that he does not wish for a naval war, which would not be advantageous to France, but that he means to have a Continental war. That to undertake this with advantage he must have 500,000 men, and that he cannot have such an amount of force on foot till next spring. On the other hand, Apponyi[1] says, as you will see, that Louis Philippe told him in the openness of his heart that the result he looked for from the war excitement in France was to get out of his faithful subjects a sanction for the fortification of Paris, which he had long wished for, but had hitherto not been able to obtain. All this does not look like war; indeed all the letters received during the last two days from Paris say that war is not expected.

The French tried to intimidate us, and thus to prevent the ratification; having failed in this they will lie by, and wait for any serious difficulty we may experience in the execution of our plans, and then they will try to interpose their good offices.

All you say in your letter of the 14th is quite true as to the reluctance of some members of the Cabinet and the lukewarmness of others; but then I think that when a Cabinet *has* agreed to a system of measures they ought to give that system fair play, and not to raise impediments to its execution in the detail of the measures by which it is to be effected, and that individual

[1] Count Apponyi was the Austrian ambassador at Paris.

members of the Cabinet ought not, as Lord Holland does every day of the week, to speak openly to all who come near them about the policy and measures which the Cabinet of which they are members is embarked in, just as a member of Opposition would speak of the policy of an administration which he was labouring to turn out. In the present state of the question this does not do so much harm, because the matter is now to be decided in the Levant; but still the effect is damaging to the Government, and in my humble opinion not much to the credit of the good sense and proper feeling of self-respect of the individuals by whom such language is held.

I find it will not be possible at the present moment for the representatives of the five contracting parties to the treaty to communicate it by a collective note to Guizot. Both Neumann and Brunnow[1] feel objections, which I think well founded.

They say that they are not in any official relation with Guizot; they, like him, are accredited to this Court, but any official communication to be made by either of their Courts to the French Government would naturally be made either at Paris by their ambassadors, or at Vienna and Petersburg to the ambassadors of France. That when a conference is established the case varies, and then all the members of the conference are expressly and officially placed in formal relation and communication with each other.

But Brunnow has another objection to any direct communication in the shape of a collective note from the four or the five to Guizot, which is, that Guizot

[1] Baron Brunnow had been sent by the Czar on a special mission to England in September 1839. He was afterwards Russian Minister in London, notably at the time of the Crimean War.

might possibly be instructed to reply to such a note, and that his reply might require a rejoinder; and that the Emperor and our Government might not agree as to the terms of such rejoinder. The Emperor might want to put in something which it would not suit us to sign; other unnecessary and inconvenient differences might arise between the four powers. Moreover, Brunnow says that when I first mentioned the idea to him he wrote to Nesselrode[1] to ask for instructions about it; that those instructions have been announced to him, but have not yet been received, and that, having asked for them, he cannot give them the go-by and act without them. Under these circumstances it seems to me that the only course to be pursued is that I should, on the part of the English Government, communicate to Guizot a copy of the treaty now that it has been ratified; and this would seem to be a natural step, as a consequence of my having communicated to him the fact of the treaty having been signed; and accordingly I inclose a draft of a note for that purpose. I send it to you by a messenger, whom you can send on to John Russell for his opinion on the matter.

If the note is to go, the sooner it goes the better.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, September 19, 1840.

ALL that you say is very true. It is absolutely necessary that we should have a Cabinet soon. Parliament stands prorogued until October 8. Whether it shall be further prorogued, and to what period, is in the present state of circumstances a matter of so much importance that it cannot be decided without a full consideration. I have therefore

[1] The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs. Count Vitzthum, in his *St. Petersburg and London*, has some amusing stories of the supreme contempt with which Nicholas regarded him, as being of German parentage.

desired Fortescue, who is gone to London this morning, to tell them to issue summonses for a Cabinet upon Monday the 28th inst. This will leave sufficient time for the insertion of the proclamation in the *Gazette*. I hope that you will approve of this.

I agree with you that the avoiding of the war, if it can be done with honour and safety, would be well bought by a change of government, though that I believe would be an evil. But it was well said by Mr. Halford the other day at Leicester that the real danger of the interruption of peace arises from the unquiet and aggressive character of the people of France, and if this be at all encouraged by success and by our yielding, though we may stave off war at present, we shall only render it more certain within a short time.

I think the warlike symptoms are decreasing daily. The language which Louis Philippe has held to Apponyi is very extraordinary. After apologising for the vivacity of Thiers, and saying that allowance must be made for him, as an author and journalist, and therefore accustomed to put things strongly and so as to strike, he said that his great object had been, by means of this war-cry, to carry two points which were very necessary—the one, the strengthening the naval forces and increasing the army; the other, the fortification of Paris—both of which the parsimony of the Chambers had hitherto prevented him from effecting; pretty strongly hinting that the latter measure, the fortifying Paris, was not directed against foreign powers.

This language appears to me not to have been very prudent, but still one is loth to think oneself more cunning than Louis Philippe.

His object was, by showing great confidence in Metternich, to induce him to originate some proposal

which should settle the whole matter and get him out of the scrape. Leopold has also written to the Queen in the same tone, as I understand, for I have not yet seen the letter, but shall do so to-day, and complaining that we show no disposition to assist in extricating the Government of France out of its difficulties.

I have a letter from Ellice. The *Observer* newspaper vexes him cruelly—much by what they say against him, more by what they say against Thiers.

I almost labour under the disadvantage of never having read the *Observer*. People who tell Ellice are continually writing themselves in the newspapers, think of nothing else, and they immediately perceive what is put in by the editor himself, and what is sent to him by others.

. . .

The same to the same. Windsor Castle, September 19, 1840.

I FORGOT in my other letter to mention to you what had been done with respect to notifying the Convention. The enclosed letter from Palmerston will tell you. His note to Guizot seemed all that could be wished, and therefore, as I thought it of importance that it should go without delay, I did not send it to you as he desired, which would have caused delay. I send you Palmerston's letters, that you may see his frame of mind. Nothing induces a man to keep his own temper so much as the observation that others either have lost or are likely to lose theirs.

The talking at Holland House is irremediable. They cannot help it, and they are not themselves aware how much they talk. In 1827 Canning said, 'But what shall we do with Lady Holland in the Cabinet?'

The Duke of Bedford is a good adviser for principles and opinions, but bad for action. All advisers are

dangerous. They encumber the free exercise of the understanding and substitute authority for reason.

The same to the same. Windsor Castle, September 26, 1840.

We must count upon Mehemet Ali's last propositions sent by Walewski being absolutely and at once refused by the Sultan.[1] Ponsonby will do his utmost to bring this about, and so will the Russian Minister; and I think I have observed through the whole of these transactions that the Russian influence generally predominates at Constantinople. If we notify to the four other powers that we are ready to accede to these proposals if they are, we shall do this knowing that the Porte is unwilling, and we shall advise the Porte to accept terms which they have already refused.

Our communication to the four powers must be firm, or it will have no effect in cooling down the present heats; and if it is known that such is our opinion, will it not entirely decide the question? Will the Pasha or France ever relax, or have any reason for relaxing afterwards? Your resignation, and that of so many who must and who would follow you, must ensure the failure of the policy and the humiliation of the country. France, seeing such an effect produced by her measures, would of course redouble them, and both the Pasha and she would persevere more strenuously in their present course. It is idle to suppose that it must not break up the present Government and place the

[1] Mehemet Ali stood out for the hereditary possession of Egypt and Syria for life. Walewski, the natural son of the Great Napoleon by a Polish lady, and afterwards Minister of Foreign Affairs under Napoleon III., began his diplomatic career with this mission to Alexandria, the object of which was to bring the Pasha to reason. Lord Ponsonby, our ambassador at the Porte, was taking a very strong line of action, and persuading the Sultan to reject all compromise with the Pasha.

country in the hands of the Conservatives. You would resign on account of unwillingness to engage in war with France, and so many would be sure to follow your lead upon this ground that it would leave the fraction of the Ministry totally unable to go on. They could not form a coalition. What is then to be done but to resort to the other party? You say you would strongly advise her not to do this, not to go to Peel—by Peel I suppose you mean his party—but who is she then to go to? Try to reason this out practically.

I sent your letter to the Queen, and I send you the note which I received in reply, and which expresses her feelings upon the subject. I shall be in town to-morrow, early.

The same to the same. Windsor Castle, September 28, 1840.

I SEND you Palmerston's memorandum. I think he is right with respect to Ponsonby. Sending another person out at this moment would have all the effects which Palmerston points out. It would seem to disavow and retract the whole of our policy, past, present, and future, and would cast a damp upon the cause of the Sultan which it would never recover.

With respect to an armistice, it appears doubtful to me whether there be any hostilities to suspend.

The question of a communication to the French Government is more doubtful. Metternich's suggestion that the French Government should re-enter into the alliance by declaring its adhesion to the principle of that alliance, viz. the support of the Sultan, without retracting its objection to the forcible execution, appears to me the most plausible course that has been suggested.

We can, however, make no proposition to France

without obtaining the concurrence of the other powers; and it would, therefore, be no immediate measure, nor any escape from present dangers. If Thiers, in order to obtain from Mehemet Ali concessions, has, as he says he has, promised him the support of France if they are not accepted, he appears to me to have placed affairs in a more dangerous position than that in which they stood before. Syria is the whole of the question, and his demanding it for Ibrahim is, in fact, demanding it hereditarily.

The same to the same. South Street, September 29, 1840.

AFTER the Queen's express direction I should not, even if I were inclined, feel justified in withholding her opinion from you, and after some hesitation I send you the whole letter, trusting to your candour.

It sounds as if I had condemned both you and Palmerston as obstinate and wrongheaded, but this is not the case. I only wrote on Sunday evening that I had seen you both, and that I was sorry that I did not perceive much approach towards an agreement in opinion.

There is certainly a great difficulty in making a move in ignorance of the actual and present state of affairs in the Levant. The measures will by this time have virtually either failed or succeeded. Affairs will have assumed such an aspect as will enable you to foretell the ultimate result with certainty.

If we have failed, it will be better to have made the overture before we knew of the failure. If we have succeeded, there will be no humiliation in offering to concert with France, which we have said that we should be ready to do, upon the execution of the Convention.

I have written to Palmerston to suggest this view.

At the same time I cannot help feeling that it will be a great degradation to give up the main objects of the Convention, accompanied as that giving up will be by the menaces and preparations of France. I think we shall suffer in general estimation, and consequently in power and influence, and France will be encouraged to resort to the same measures upon other occasions; which will have a great tendency, to say the least, to bring on war at no very distant period.

The Cabinet came together on September 27, and after several meetings it was agreed that overtures should be made to France.

Lord Holland to Lord Melbourne. Private. Saturday night. 1840.

WHAT the Cabinet determined on, or at least intended, to-day seems, to my unfeigned delight, quite sufficient to answer the great purpose of peace, provided it *be conveyed to Paris speedily*, and communicated in as friendly a spirit as it is conceived. If *you* were, without loss of time (and why should not you?), to tell Guizot in a note that his paper was received with pleasure as indicative of returning confidence; that we had agreed to dissuade the Sultan from insisting on the *déchéance* of the Viceroy,[1] and that when we had concerted with others the manner of doing so we should immediately apprise France formally of it; that the guarantees for the balance of power suggested in his paper seemed to meet the ideas of your colleagues as a fair basis on which to work out a permanent settlement—but in such a permanent settlement there must, of course, be no departure from the letter or spirit of the treaty, though we and you hoped all parties to that treaty would be ready and happy to discuss with France the means of reconciling our adherence

[1] The Porte had decreed the deposition of the Pasha on September 14.

to it with the views of France. If this, or half this, were said *promptly*, and in the spirit of conciliation, it is my conscientious belief that peace is secured. But if formalities tend to delay, and if the communication when made is to be made in the spirit of stickling and haggling for a little more or less, and not in that of confidence and reconciliation, *then and in that case* I do not think you will avert the calamity. Any reverse in Syria—and I cannot deem it improbable—would destroy not only the grace, but the benefit of such language or offer. It would be then more humiliating than twice the quantity of concession *now*, and, unless the French character is much altered, is likely to meet with ten times more insolence than if made in the moment of apparent though precarious triumph.

Cavil not for the ninth part of an inch, but give what can safely be spared to a well-deserving friend. What is given in that spirit and soon may really purchase good-will and re-establish confidence. What may be extorted from a niggardly hand, either by a reverse of fortune or by hard and protracted bargaining, breeds distrust and dislike, if not scorn and contempt.

So confident am I that peace is now to be had, and so apprehensive am I that unless you strike while the iron is hot the opportunity may be irretrievably lost, that at the risk of boring you I have written this long letter, to urge you to take it in your own hands so far as to write in general phraseology the favourable result of this day's Cabinet to Guizot. Two persons fully authorised and equally disposed to come to an amicable agreement might settle it in ten minutes, in a way which would appease the French public, satisfy the obligations of the July treaty, and secure the integrity

of Turkey and Egypt against all foreign aggression. *Liberavi animam meam.* Good night.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, October 23, 1840.

I HAVE this morning received yours from Bowood. You will probably have heard at the same time of this melancholy and sudden event at Holland House.[1] It must have affected you all deeply, particularly you and Lansdowne. Charles Howard writes me word that he has seen Lady Holland, and that she was wonderfully calm. Dr. Holland[2] says that she is, as it were, stunned, and that it is impossible to say how she may be when she recovers from the effect of the blow.

With respect to the meeting of Parliament, I agree with you that we may wait until we see the effect of our last communication, and the tone of the speech of the King of France upon the 28th; if that tone is hostile, surely we shall have no alternative left.

You see the operations on the coast of Syria.[3] They have been prosecuted with much skill and bravery and enterprise; as much has been achieved as the force could achieve, but I cannot say that I see reason to be sanguine about the final result. Palmerston is quite confident of clearing the country of the Egyptians almost immediately, and before there is any question of the fleets leaving the coast. Ponsonby writes more madly than ever. Better, he says, lose the fleet than abandon the enterprise.

Guizot has been here. He goes on Sunday next, evidently with the hope and design of supplanting

[1] The death of Lord Holland on October 22.

[2] The father of the present Lord Knutsford, and the author of the well-known *Recollections of My Past Life*, in which is to be found a sketch of Lord Melbourne's character.

[3] Beyrout was bombarded on August 29, and Sidon on September 26

Thiers. I had a conversation with him yesterday, in which he said that they could certainly restrain the warlike feelings of the French people at present, but that he would not undertake to be able to do so if the operations in Syria were protracted. By the way, upon this point the French say one day one thing, and another, another, just as suits the present object. He evidently hinted to me to say something to him about Syria—something conceding part of it; which, with my knowledge of Palmerston's opinion, confirmed by the favourable accounts received yesterday, I was of course unable to do.

You are right about the press. If it is, as it is, part of the management of the foreign affairs, it ought to be determined as a general question. But I have long since given it up in despair; I never see an article which I entirely and in all respects approve. You say we should adopt a tone 'firm without insult.' Certainly; but did you ever know a newspaper adopt such a tone? Are they capable of doing it? Is it in their nature? I believe not; at the same time I am sorry to say that the *Times*, while equally hostile to France, has written upon this subject in a tone far more proper and becoming than the *Morning Chronicle*.

Hill[1] has been here this morning, and showed me the Duke of Wellington's letter about Dover Castle and the exposed state of the shipping in the Downs. I told him that I thought he might safely send some troops to Dover without fear of creating alarm.

The Duke of Wellington says that he feels secure that Louis Philippe would not permit any violent act of aggression; but he says Louis Philippe's life has been attempted,[2] and who can answer for any succeeding

[1] Lord Hill, the Commander-in-Chief. [2] By Darmès, on October 15.

government? He adds, but can we trust to Louis Philippe's power? When Thiers was Minister before, he ordered troops to be assembled on the frontier of Spain without the King's knowledge and against his opinion. Why may he not give a similar order with reference to England now? There is much shrewdness in this.' I have not time to read this over.

It was evident that the supreme moment had arrived. Thiers, towards the end of October, announced his intention of calling out an extraordinary conscription of 150,000 men, and of summoning the Chambers for the sanction of fresh military preparations. Lord Melbourne saw that something must be done, and at once addressed a strong remonstrance to Louis Philippe through the King of the Belgians.[1] Unfortunately no copy of the letter has been preserved. But there can be no doubt that it was couched in language befitting the occasion. Lord Palmerston's free version, given in 1865 to Mr. Hayward, was: 'Thiers's announcement is a threat. By God! I won't stand it. If this goes on I will immediately call Parliament together, and see what they think of it.' The version given by Raikes, and corroborated by Victor Cousin, then a Minister of Louis Philippe, who saw the identical letter, is even more outspoken: 'If France persists in her hostile armaments England will take very summary measures to *balayer* them at once.' The result was immediate. Louis Philippe declined to countenance a warlike speech on the opening of the Chambers, and the Thiers Ministry came to an end.

Lord Palmerston was naturally jubilant:—

Lord Palmerston to Lord Melbourne. C.T.,

KING LEOPOLD'S letter confirms what I have often said and have long believed—namely, that the French armaments have been a man-

[1] 'I have written to Leopold to represent as strongly as I can the difficulty in which the armaments of France place us, and to urge him to persuade her to relax both her language and preparations' (to Lord John Russell, October 20). The letter must have been written about the 16th. It will be observed that Lord Melbourne on the 23rd was not aware of Thiers's resignation on the 20th. Guizot himself was not fully informed until the 24th (*Greville*, part ii. vol. i. p. 343, foot-note).

October 25, 1840. œuvre for the purpose of producing an effect beyond their reality, in fact, a mere trick; and that while the French Government were trying to frighten all Europe into concession by pretended armaments, they were, in fact, not doing more than completing their regular peace establishment, which has of late years been let down below its proper amount. But this shows how weak and ill-informed those people have been who would have had us give way to threats of war which rested upon no solid foundation; because, in truth, those armaments which the French Government and its friends in England have tried to represent as the indications of war were, on the contrary, proofs of the incapacity of France to make war, because they proved that her actual force is below even her peace establishment, and it is clear that, before she can make war, she must have a war establishment. Therefore this letter of Leopold's, if the statement which it contains is correct, brushes away at once the whole web of deception about imminent war by which some people have endeavoured to blind our eyes.

Another remarkable point is the manner in which what has happened since that letter was written has shown the fallacy of the argument which it contains—that the King could not get rid of Thiers without the greatest danger unless Thiers should be outvoted in the Chamber.

Instead of that the King *has* got rid of Thiers with the greatest ease, and Thiers, it seems, is going, not into bitter opposition, but to cultivate the fine arts and to write more histories in Italy. Depend upon it this retirement of Thiers is only another act of the melodrama which he and the King have been for some time past playing. The King gave Thiers permission to

bully and swagger and threaten, and to gain all he could by so doing, provided he did not go to the extent of war; and the King himself played up to Thiers's acting in this respect, and by hints and innuendoes, and hopes that he should not be forced, and fears that he should be forced, and assurances that he would stand out as long as he could, but that he could not answer for events, did all he decently could to back up Thiers and help his stratagem.

But it was manifest from the beginning that if Thiers did not succeed in frightening us he would be obliged to go out; and could not meet the Chamber as Minister. Because, though he had carefully abstained from anything that could *commit the King with foreign powers* on the question of peace and war, he had been obliged, in order to play up to the lamps, to commit himself personally with the public in Paris. Well, we have stood firm, and have not allowed ourselves to be made dupes; and therefore Thiers goes out. The question then was, how he was to get off the stage. He could not go off kneeling any more than the *dramatis personæ* in the 'Critic';[1] and so, according to the most approved method of getting the hero away, he went off in *heroics*.

If you remember, Seymour[2] told us a fortnight ago that he knew the Queen of the Belgians had heard from her family that Thiers was to propose things which he knew beforehand the King would not agree to. And so it has been, and a very well-arranged wind-up it has been;

[1] After the prayer to Mars:—

Puff. You could not go off kneeling, could you?

Sir Walter. O no, sir, impossible!

Puff. It would have a good effect, i' faith, if you could exeunt praying. Yes, and would vary the established mode of springing off with a glance at the pit.

[2] Sir Hamilton Seymour, afterwards Minister at St. Petersburg.

Thiers saves his consistency with the French people, and the King saves his pacific relations with Europe. Soult having been the person who made all those pledges and declarations about Turkey which tied up and embarrassed Thiers, he comes into power again, and can act up to his own pledges without any embarrassment whatever; and if the King does not succeed in getting from us *in formâ pauperis* and out of our compassion those concessions which he has been unable to extort by threats and from our fears, he will find no difficulty with his present administration in acquiescing in any settlement of the Turkish question which the four powers may insist upon as conformable with the treaty. The temporary excitement which the King allowed Thiers to get up may for some little time be an embarrassment to the French Government; but the Peace party is beyond comparison the most powerful, and when the Government throws its weight into that scale there can be no doubt that it will preponderate.

With respect to the general treaty which King Leopold speaks of, I conceive that you would be quite ready to conclude a treaty, in conjunction with France and the other powers, for affording to the Sultan, for a limited time to come, support against internal and external danger—assuming always that the present questions are first to be settled according to the treaty; and I really think that you will find the whole matter in Syria satisfactorily arranged in the next two months.

As to what the Duke of Wellington has written to King Leopold, I do not see how he could have said anything else; but it does not seem to me that the civil expressions of the Duke, writing out of office, from Walmer, ought necessarily to be taken literally by us as a guide for our conduct.

Just as matters seemed to be improving, Lord John Russell discovered that Lord Palmerston had declined the Austrian proposal of a congress for the settlement of disputes, and it was with difficulty that he could be prevented from resigning.[1]

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, October 31, 1840.

I HAVE just received your letter. I think you take the despatch to which it adverts much too seriously. It was not intended, as I take it, to reject all negotiation for the future, but meant to say that at the present moment it was not prudent to establish such a congress.

I am sure that if you think seriously for a moment you will not take the step which your letters seem to intimate.

We have now a prospect—and it appears to me a very good one—of settling this matter amicably. Your retiring would overthrow this at once, and the arrangement which you mention would have the effect of deciding the question of peace or war for the latter.

I am sure that you will not sacrifice the interests of the country to an offence of your own, however great it may be.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, November 1, 1840.

IT is almost useless for me to say anything. You have, of course, considered all the grounds and consequences of such a step before you determined upon taking it at such a moment. It must, of course, break up the Government. You will be considered as resigning for peace, and so many will follow you in that view that the remnant will be quite unable to undertake the affairs of the country. Supposing what you meant to intimate in your letter, which I received yesterday, were to take place—that your place could be filled, and Palmerston

[1] *Greville*, part ii. vol. i. p. 345.

substituted for you in the House of Commons, and no others change—I own I shall be unwilling [to continue] my present responsibility under the impression which would be created in France and Europe by your retiring and Palmerston's remaining and acquiring additional weight and influence.

What I mean by a fair prospect of settling the affair is this. If we were to succeed promptly in Syria—which I do not expect—the affair could be arranged.

If we are compelled to withdraw our force and suspend operations—which I do expect—it is quite evident that the Cabinet will be for taking measures to settle the difference by negotiation. To these measures Palmerston, I think, would very likely not have agreed; but *that*, in my opinion, would have been the time for bringing matters to the decision to which you are bringing them now.

I sent Palmerston your letter of yesterday, and desired him either to write to you or to see you about it.

I will come up to London to-morrow, and should be glad to find you—at any rate on Tuesday morning.

Louis Philippe was most anxious that something should be done to give the new Soult-Guizot Ministry a status, and a significant passage from one of his letters to the King of the Belgians was transmitted to Lord Melbourne:[1]—'Ne nous y trompons pas. Le point de départ c'est le renversement ou la consolidation du ministère actuel. S'il est renversé, *c'est la guerre à tout prix suivie d'un* 1793 *perfectionné*. S'il est consolidé, c'est la paix qui triomphe. Mais il faut se dépêcher, car vous savez que les têtes gauloises sont bien mobiles.'

The question, however, was to be fought out in the Levant.

[1] There is nothing to show how the fragment, which is signed by Louis Philippe, was communicated to Lord Melbourne. The whole letter the date of which is November 6, is to be found in the *Revue Rétrospective*, a collection of secret documents made public after the revolution of 1848.

Early in December the news of the fall of Acre reached London, and with the submission of the Pasha the period of suspense came to an end.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. December 9, 1840.

ESTIMATES must depend upon circumstances. If the East is settled, as I trust it will be, and indeed is, it will, of course, be unnecessary to keep up our present force in the Mediterranean, or anything like it. But if France persists in her present armaments, in having twenty-five sail of the line ready for sea, backed by an augmented army, we must have an equal, and I think we ought to have a superior, fleet. The country must pay for safety and defence.

Meanwhile the Chinese war had been dragging on, and after the mouth of the Canton river had been forced, Captain Elliot concluded a preliminary treaty with the Celestial Government.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Downing Street, April 30, 1841.

I RETURN you Harvey's letters. He is a very foolish fellow, but I had the same feeling for him that you have, and if you think that the ability he has shown as Premier of New Brunswick renders you secure in trusting to him Newfoundland in its present condition, I have no objection.

Palmerston is much dissatisfied with the Chinese treaty, particularly with the amount of indemnity and the time given for the payment of it, and so am I. Palmerston is, or was, for disavowing Elliot and the treaty and renewing the demands which he was instructed to make, but which it seems he never did make. I have great doubts of this. The treaty as it stands saves our honour and produces all the necessary moral effect. To renew the war would keep the whole thing alive, which it is of the utmost importance to close. If we break a treaty clearly concluded by our plenipotentiary the Chinese will be convinced that we never

meant to observe that or any other treaty; and if we should obtain a larger compensation, which is uncertain, it certainly will not be so much larger as to pay for the increased expense to which we shall put ourselves.'

Lord Palmerston's views, however, prevailed, and Elliot was disavowed and recalled.

CHAPTER XIV

PATRONAGE

1835–1841

LORD MELBOURNE'S patronage cost him many an anxious moment. He declined additional honours for himself, and, despite the weakness of the Government in the House of Lords, he was most sparing and scrupulous in recommending creations of peers. 'It will be apparent,' wrote Lord John Russell to him in 1836, 'that you have been more moderate in your creations than any of your predecessors.' He seems, though careless of State papers of vital importance, to have carefully preserved all applications for appointments and promotions, and his refusals of demands which he thought unworthy of consideration were couched in terms of crushing severity. But his answers would be pointless without the names of the applicants, and those names, for obvious reasons, it would be unfair to give. There was a familiar reply of his to an earl soliciting a marquisate, which began, 'My dear ——, how can you be such a damned fool?' Of another seeker after honours and rewards he asked, 'Confound it, does he want a Garter for his other leg?' To a colonial governor who wished to take a title which would be reminiscent of his administration he wrote, 'Is it not too much like Scipio Africanus?'

It was the same with his ecclesiastical appointments. 'Damn it, another bishop dead!' is the manner in which he is related to have received the news of a vacancy on the episcopal bench. But the vacancy was not filled up without much deliberation; and Lord Melbourne is almost the only Premier of whom it can be said that he was intimately acquainted with the writings those whom he promoted. Some of his motives are curious:-

I take —— to be a mere literary man; and literary men are seldom good for anything.

Dr. —— is one of those men whom the Whigs call a Tory; whom the Tories call a fair man, inclined to Whig opinions; and who calls himself a man of no politics. Such men are for the most part, if not always, really Tories; at least, quite unprepared to support the Whigs in any measures of novelty or magnitude.[1]

I believe that I have been misinformed after all about the Deanery of Exeter, and that it is in the gift of the Crown. There is much application for it, and —— writes in the greatest anxiety, saying that they want a man of the firmest character and the greatest abilities to cope with that devil of a bishop, who inspires more terror than ever Satan did. If it is in the gift of the Crown Wrio shall have it, and I wish you would write and tell him so. I think his aristocratic name and title will be of advantage to him in his contest with the Prince of Darkness, of whom, however, it must be said that he is a gentleman.[2]

The outcry which followed the appointment of Dr. Hampden to the Regius Professorship of Divinity at Oxford will long be remembered. It would appear from the following letter that Lord Melbourne had already proposed to give him preferment.

Lord Melbourne to Archbishop Whately. Confidential. South Street, October 13, 1835.

Upon consideration of all the names which we reviewed, and of all the conversations which we had in London, it appears to me, upon the whole, that Dr. Hampden would be the safest choice. It is probable that the see which it may be in my power to offer him will be a poor one; and I wish to know whether you could

[1] To Lord John Russell, May 4, 1839.

[2] To Lord John Russell, January 9, 1839.

without pledging me to make the offer, which is always very inconvenient, ascertain whether, if it were made, he would be willing to accept it. If you can quietly obtain any information for me upon this point I shall feel much obliged to you for it.

Lord Melbourne to Archbishop Whately. Ecclesiastical Commission. January 25, 1836.

I AM very much indebted to you for your letter. I never was more puzzled with any decision that I had to make. I feel that the appointment, for reasons, to many of which you advert in your letter, is more important than that of the bishop. The appointment is a lucrative one. . . .

Now it appears to me that a man should devote his whole time to his professorship and his living, and should not be also the head of a house, or be encumbered with any other public occupation. I now beg leave to submit to you and ask your opinion upon a list which has been given to me by the Archbishop of Canterbury of persons whom he conceives to be best qualified to succeed to Dr. Burton:—

Mr. Pusey, the Professor of Hebrew.
Dr. Shuttleworth, Master of New College.
Mr. Ogilvie, late Fellow of Balliol College, one of the Archbishop's chaplains.
Mr. Newman, of Oriel.
Mr. Keble, of Oriel.
Mr. Miller, of Worcester College.
Dr. Short, Rector of St. George's, Bloomsbury.
Dr. Goddard, Archdeacon of Lincoln.

From another quarter there has been mentioned to me Dr. Cramer, Head of New Inn Hall.

None of these names proving satisfactory, Lord Melbourne, on the advice of Archbishop Whately and Bishop Copleston.

recurred to Dr. Hampden. The Professor designate could not hold his tongue until the appointment was confirmed, and the fat was in the fire.

Lord Melbourne to the King. South Street, February 15, 1836.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and respectfully acknowledges your Majesty's communication, which Viscount Melbourne received last night, and has this morning submitted to your Majesty's confidential servants.

Viscount Melbourne is very much concerned to find that any difficulty should arise in your Majesty's mind with respect to the completion of the appointment of Dr. Hampden to the Regius Professorship of Divinity in Oxford, which your Majesty had approved by your letter of the 10th inst. addressed to Viscount Melbourne. Your Majesty will feel that this question affects deeply many great interests, both personal and political.

It much concerns, in the first place, the personal honour and character of your Majesty's confidential servants, and of Viscount Melbourne in particular, who has made this recommendation. It touches still more deeply the moral and religious character of Dr. Hampden himself, seeing that it accuses him of not believing the Articles which he has signed and the faith which he continues to profess. It tends to diminish your Majesty's power and prerogative, by which the appointment to this situation is vested exclusively in your Majesty, without being subject to any other control or dictation whatever. It seriously infringes upon the rights of private judgment and free inquiry, which are the foundations of the Protestant faith; and it saps the great principle of toleration, the great glory of this age and of your Majesty's reign. Finally, it seriously endangers the real interests of the Church of England, into which

it introduces schism and division, and which has already enemies enough without by proscription or exclusion raising up to herself others, and those amongst her most eminent and distinguished children. . . .

Viscount Melbourne considered [the representations and arguments of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York] to be mere clamour and outcry; and to unreasonable agitation Viscount Melbourne is very little disposed to yield, whether it arise in universities or elsewhere. Viscount Melbourne has some practical knowledge of universities, and in his opinion there is in those bodies as much bitterness, as much faction, as much violence, as much prejudice as there ever was in any public assembly or popular club, let them have been composed how they may. . . . To what do the charges against Dr. Hampden amount? That Dr. Hampden is known to have expressed himself in printed publications in such a manner as to produce on the minds of many an impression that he maintains doctrines and principles fundamentally opposed to the integrity of the Christian faith. Is this sufficient? Is his faith to be denied upon such grounds as these—'an impression upon the minds of many,' without even stating whether in the opinion of those who signed the paper the impression is just? There are innumerable impressions upon the minds of many, but who ever considered such impressions as any proof against the person whom they affected?

Your Majesty will perceive that Viscount Melbourne has already conversed with the Archbishop of Canterbury, as well as the Archbishop of York, upon this subject, and that their opinion has not shaken his determination to advise your Majesty to appoint Dr. Hampden. Viscount Melbourne, in obedience to your Majesty's commands, will again see the Archbishop of

Canterbury; but unless his Grace can produce something much more decisive and cogent than any of his previous arguments, your Majesty will perceive that it will be impossible that Viscount Melbourne should alter an opinion which Viscount Melbourne conceives himself to have formed upon the soundest and most certain grounds.

Archbishop Whately to Lord Melbourne. Private. Dublin, February 21, 1836.

WHEN you ask whether Arnold is open to any reasonable objection on the ground of any heterodoxy in his works, and I answer—as I can without hesitation—*certainly not*, I have literally complied with your lordship's request, and if this is exactly all you want you may save yourself the trouble of reading what follows.

But I think it right to add this observation, that the *imputation* of heresy (which you know exists already against him) is likely to be kept up and urged, on as good grounds as against Hampden, and in some respects on very *similar* grounds :—

1. One cause is that both, being men of independent mind, are accustomed to express even generally received notions in such terms as seem to themselves most appropriate, without tying themselves down to hackneyed phrases. Now, there is always a large portion of mankind who do not *recognise* their *own* opinions (so called) when clothed in any unusual expression. And hence, many conclude that a man differs from them even where he does not if he varies his phraseology ever so little.

2. There are many who cannot distinguish among the opinions they hold what are and what are not portions of the *creed of their Church*. . . . Whether the Gospel of St. Matthew was originally written in Greek or in Hebrew; whether Peter ever was at Rome;

whether Paul ever was in Britain, &c., are points on which divines of our Church have differed and which it has left open—though there must be a mistake on one side or the other of those who have maintained opposite opinions. But there are many men who, satisfied of their own orthodoxy, at once pronounce a man heterodox who does not agree with them on *every* point. And this is as common in other matters as in religion. 'Disloyal' and 'unconstitutional' are terms just as rashly poured forth by politicians (often in misjudging sincerity) on their opponents in respect of points in which, though only one side can be in the right, both may be equally *constitutional.*

3. Many trump up a charge of heresy, disloyalty, or what not (and often bring themselves in time sincerely to believe it) from some aversion to the man on other grounds, whether of personal jealousy or dislike to some *other* portion of his (real or supposed) conduct or tenets. Arnold is a Whig. Hampden is not a Tory. And he was for the relaxation of the subscription to the Articles at matriculation. Hence it is that men now bring a charge of heresy against him which, if they had been sincere and honest, they would have brought before the regular tribunal three or four years ago, when he was delivering before the University of Oxford and printing at the University Press the sermons which they charge with Socinianism. How much the same sort of feeling operates with regard to Arnold you may understand from a dialogue between a friend of mine and a man whom I also know, holding a situation of eminence in the Church, and not more prejudiced and narrow-minded than the majority, though much more frank in his avowals. On hearing a high opinion expressed of A.'s sermons he observed, 'How can you

apply such expressions to the works of a fellow like that?' 'Because I think they deserve them.' 'Don't you know what opinions he expressed on the French Revolution?' 'None at all in his sermons; they do not treat of the French Revolution.' 'Oh, I can't bear anything that comes from such a man as that.'

I myself differ from Arnold in some important points, while I regard him as one of the most single-hearted, public-spirited, and amicable men in the world; but it is remarkable that those who hold him in the greatest abhorrence have quite mistaken some of his opinions, and do, in reality, agree with him on points in which I strongly disagree, though his *application* and theirs of their common principles are widely different. . . . I should like, indeed, to see the terms of our communion enlarged, though not to anything like the degree which A. proposes, who would introduce a mere nominal agreement, leading only to a great increase of real discord. . . .

I rejoice that your lordship has upheld (as it seems to me) the prerogative against the attempt of a *self-constituted* body of advisers aiming at a veto on the appointments of the Crown.

Hampden will be much gratified at your just appreciation of his merits. When I consider *who* were among the foremost of his opponents—that such men had been recommended for such an office—I cannot but feel a satisfaction in having given (though it was probably unnecessary) an opinion of them which experience has so sadly verified.

P.S.—Hampden was chiefly unpopular at *Oxford* from *academical* causes. I do not think he would have been so much opposed as A. in appointment to the bench.

Lord Melbourne to Dr. Pusey. South Street, February 24, 1836.

ALTHOUGH I cannot be expected to concur in many of the conclusions of your letter, and although I have read many of the statements which it contains with the deepest concern, I have yet derived great satisfaction from the confidence and openness of the communication. I have only to express my wish that I had received it before; that I had received it during that not short interval which took place before I determined upon the appointment of Dr. Hampden, and during those anxious enquiries which I made in order to guide my judgment in that important decision. I do not mean to imply that the information that you have now imparted would, if it had been then afforded, have altered my determination; but I certainly should have paid it that respectful and serious attention to which its own weight and the character and station of its author entitled it.

The understanding which you describe to have prevailed in the University respecting the measures which I took and the persons whom I consulted is, like all information collected from general rumour, partly true and partly false. It would have been, in my opinion, better not to have depended upon it, but to have communicated privately that information of which you thought it material that I should be in possession. People do not like others, however they may respect them, to be applied to upon their business, especially if that application be for the purpose of controlling and overruling them; and if you want a thing done, take my advice, and hereafter go to the man who has to do it.

However, your letter has entirely removed any feeling of offence which might have arisen in my mind, and I am little desirous of reverting to the past, which it is useless either to complain of or to condemn.

I entirely concur with you in the necessity of agreement, if it can be created consistently with other more important objects, upon the greater points between those who fill the theological chairs in the same university. It is hardly necessary to go to Germany to learn so plain and so obvious a truth; and the theological colloquy (?) and religious belief which prevails in the universities of that country is, if it be such as it is popularly represented, not very favourable testimony to the results of those institutions and to the manner in which they are conducted. Uniformity of opinion, however desirable, may be purchased at too high a price. We must not sacrifice everything to it; soundness of opinion, reasonableness of opinion, extent of knowledge, powers, intellectual and physical, must also be taken into account. Your principle would make the opinions of the present professors the standard of every future appointment. Before persons are chosen on account of the consonance of their tenets with those of the individuals who at present fill the theological chairs, you must admit that we must a little consider what are the tenets of those gentlemen; and you are very well aware that great alarm has been excited in the minds of many whose authority I respect by certain tenets, which have, I believe, been published anonymously, but with which you are supposed to have some connection, and which are represented to me to be of a novel character and inconsistent with the hitherto received doctrines of the Church of England. I have not seen the Tracts I refer to, and I should be glad to obtain them; I only speak from what I hear. I therefore mean to pronounce no opinion upon them. I do not myself dread bold enquiry and speculation. I have seen too many new theories spring up and die away to feel

much alarm upon such a subject. If they are founded on truth, they establish themselves and become part of the established belief. If they are erroneous, they decay and perish.

The part of your letter which I have read with the greatest pain is that in which you designate the course which may be possibly pursued by those who govern your colleges. I will not believe in such a determination until it actually takes place, and therefore I will say no more than that, in my opinion, it is the duty of all who think well of the University, and who mean to act for the furtherance of religion and in the spirit of Christianity, to use their utmost efforts to make every possible concession in order to avert such a result.

I return you my thanks for calling my attention to the general state of religious feeling in the country, and to the deep interest which is taken in religious questions and ecclesiastical appointments. Be assured that I am neither unaware of its extent nor of its fervour, and that I have not been a careless observer of its progress. I doubt not that it is working for good, but the best and most holy aspirations are liable to be affected by the weakness of our nature and to be corrupted by our malignant passions. The danger of religious zeal is the spirit of ill-will, hatred, and malice, of intolerance and persecution, which in its own warmth and sincerity it is too apt to engender; a spirit to which, in whatever form or place it may show itself, I have a decided antipathy, and will oppose at all hazards all the resistance in my power.

Lord Melbourne to Archbishop

I WANT an Oxonian to make Bishop of Chichester. I must have a man who will go with us upon the Irish Church. I have named

Whately. Confidential. Downing Street, July 8, 1836.

Longley[1] and Butler,[2] who have both doubts on the subject, to the great discontent of my supporters. I cannot afford to be liberal again. Would Hawkins do; and will he swallow the shibboleth?[3] Excuse the haste in which I write, and the careless manner in which I express myself.

Lord Melbourne to the Archbishop of Canterbury. South Street, July 19, 1840.

I AM very much obliged to you for your letter. I was aware of the translation of a German essay upon the Gospel of St. Luke,[4] a work published by Mr. Thirlwall fifteen years ago, and, I believe, but am not sure, before he was in orders. I will further admit that my knowledge of this publication, and my fear of the offence which it might have given, have inclined me to defer for some time recommending Mr. Thirlwall to that promotion in the Church which I was told from all quarters that he deserved. I have not read the essay through myself—to do so would require more biblical training than I possess, and more time than I can give—but having curiously looked at it I certainly think that it was not prudently selected for translation; and the Bishops of Ely[5] and Chichester, who have at my request examined the work, tell me that there were in the preface some passages respecting the inspiration of the New Testament which they considered objectionable, but at the same time they seemed to think that the

[1] Dr. Longley had been appointed Bishop of Ripon earlier in the year. He was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1862–1868.

[2] Dr. Samuel Butler, Head-master of Shrewsbury School, who became Bishop of Lichfield in 1836.

[3] Dr. Hawkins apparently would not swallow the shibboleth, for Dr. Shuttleworth, Warden of New College, was appointed.

[4] By Schleiermacher. The appointment in question was the bishopric of St. David's.

[5] Dr. Allen was Bishop of Ely.

errors, considering the time and circumstances in which they were committed, were not of such magnitude as to bar the promotion of a man of so much learning and ability. This also is my opinion, upon which I have acted; and I have made this short explanation in return for the candour and fairness of your Grace's letter, and also because that, while I feel myself bound to recommend for promotion clergymen whose general views upon political matters coincide with my own, I am most anxious not to advance any man whose doctrines are not in unison with those of the Established Church, or even whose promotion would be disagreeable to the great body of the clergy.

Lord Melbourne to the Bishop of Norwich. Windsor Castle, August 24, 1840.

I RETURN you Dr. Arnold's letters. With respect to the immediate object of it, the Act of last session has annexed this canonry of Christchurch, which has just fallen vacant, to the Margaret Professorship of Divinity.

I have, as you know, a high opinion of Dr. Arnold, which has been raised still higher by the affair of the wardenship of Manchester,[1] but Dr. Arnold has published some indiscreet opinions—I call them indiscreet because they have, as it appears to me, without any adequate reason or object, impaired his own utility—and these opinions would, I own, render me unwilling to name him for a professorship of divinity, or any science connected with divinity, in the University of Oxford.[2]

The same to the same.

THE incumbent of Woodbridge is anxious to exchange benefices with the incumbent of

[1] Declined by Arnold.

[2] The allusion is to Arnold's pamphlet on *Church Reform*, published in 1833, and his *Essay on the Interpretation of Scripture*, with the appendix on 'The Priesthood.'

Private. Windsor Castle, August 10, 1841.

Methwold (?), both in your diocese. Do you think this ought to be done; and would the arrangement have your approbation and sanction?

I do not much like myself this chopping and changing of livings. A clergyman should take his parish as a husband does his wife—for better, for worse, and not be seeking separation on any small disgust, or for any petty reason, such as climate, bad neighbourhood, quarrelling with parishioners. The liberty of divorce would, in both cases, lead to a dissolution of the connection for any and every trifling reason.

Pensions on the Civil List were carefully considered before they were given. Readers of Lord John Russell's 'Life of Moore' will remember an admirable letter about a pension to the poet's sons, in which is discussed the danger of starting young men in life with a small annuity. Lord Melbourne's quarrel with Faraday, whom he mistook, or pretended to mistake, for an astronomer, and roundly abused for applying for a pension, was probably due to some temporary cause of annoyance totally unconnected with the subject at issue. Anyhow, the dispute was settled in a manner creditable to both sides.[1]

Mr. Cary[2] has just published a sonnet addressed to Durham, in which he condemns me for having abandoned and deserted Durham. . . . Now would not to give him a pension at this moment be straining even the Christian maxim of 'return good for evil'? As I interpret that text it means that, if those who have injured you come in your way, you should do them every

[1] Bence Jones's *Life of Faraday*, ii. 56-63. Lord Melbourne was reported to have said that he looked upon the whole system of giving pensions to literary and scientific persons as a piece of humbug; and he owned that he had expressed himself 'certainly in an imperfect, and, perhaps, in too blunt and inconsiderate a manner.' He used to express similar opinions on the encouragement of art to Haydon.

[2] The translator of Dante.

benefit you can; but it does not appear to mean that you should select them for favour in preference to those who have served you.[1]

Mr. Cary was, as will be seen below, forgiven; and though Leigh Hunt's libel on the Prince Regent stood in the way of his pension so long as Lord Melbourne lived, he twice received a grant of 200*l.* from the Royal Bounty Fund.

Leigh Hunt to Lord Melbourne. August 4, 1839.

OWING to the non-receipt of the letter which Lord Holland was good enough to write to my friend Mr. Serjeant Talfourd (who was from home on circuit), it was not until Wednesday last that I became acquainted with the great kindness again done me by your lordship.

I wish it were in my power, without entering into painful details, to give your lordship an idea of the *extreme good* done to a struggling and economical household by the second disbursement from the royal fund. Suffice it to say, it has a second time cleared away the worst part of obstacles which it is difficult for a family to remain quite free from whose efforts are led by such a pen as mine—often in a sick hand; though, since I had to make my last acknowledgments, its burdens have been lightened by the employment of some of us in a fresh quarter, and my own health has been bettered by an excellent physician, and by what has thus bettered us all. This is the best way I can thank your lordship, by showing you the good you have done; but I have been much perplexed (living, as I do, at so great, and I fear so ignorant, a distance from affairs of Court) to know whether it would become me to mingle with my thanks to your lordship any expression, however humble, of my duty to the mistress of the royal fund. If not, you

[1] To Lord John Russell, January 5, 1839.

will smile and pardon me this mention of it; if otherwise, may I beg, in the most passing and least presumptuous way I can think of (with the exception of it thus being through your lordship's medium), to lay that duty at her Majesty's feet, as one of the most cordial and affectionate of her subjects, and publicly known to be such in the quarters in which his pen is directed?

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. July 13, 1841.

THERE is 700*l.* a year of pension to dispose of. I quite agree with you that they have been too much given to the literary and scientific; and thus a notion has been generated, as I knew it would be, that they belong entirely to that class. You have sent two cases, Captain Pringle and Mrs. Jeremie.[1] The former appears to me to be hardly a case for pension—his services are not sufficient, and he is quite capable of work. With respect to the latter, Mrs. Jeremie, I am afraid you have had many Governors of Sierra Leone die prematurely, leaving distressed widows. Compassion, and feeling, and even a sense of justice, is for making provision in all such cases, but experience soon discovers that for this no wealth is sufficient.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Windsor Castle, July 19, 1841.

THERE is a sum—700*l.*—to be disposed of in pensions. How much would you like for Mrs. Jeremie—is she not Lady Jeremie?—and what is to be done with the rest? You wrote to me some time ago about Wordsworth. What he wishes for himself, and what his friends wish for him, is to give up his place in the collection of the revenue to his son, and to have a pension of 300*l.* for himself. Baring, I believe, had some objection to this, but I have

[1] Sir John Jeremie died at Sierra Leone in April. Sydney Smith's joke was that 'Sierra Leone had two Governors, one just arrived in the colony, the other just arrived in England.'

desired him to be asked again about it. You wrote to me some time ago about Cary, the translator of Dante. I have forgiven him his sonnet now, and should have no objection to give him something. The list of applications which I have comprises Mrs. James, widow of the writer of the Naval History; Leigh Hunt, distinguished writer of seditious and treasonable libels; Colonel Napier, historian of the war in Spain, conceited and dogmatic Radical, and grandson of a duke; Mr. Cary, translator of Dante, madman; Sheridan Knowles, man of great genius, but not old nor poor enough for a pension. Say what you think ought to be done. If you gave Mrs. Jeremie 200*l.* there will remain five, if 100*l.* six. Napier has been speaking and acting with great violence at the Bath election. He knocked a man down, and, I believe, abused the Government broadly; but I am not so sure of the last.

I thought your address extremely well done. I wrote to Duncannon the few observations that occurred to me upon it, and left it to his discretion whether to insert it or to leave it until he heard from you again. The general report is that they will oppose the re-election of the Speaker. I have no fear of our party being kept together in some shape or another. A party has never yet been entirely broken up by defeat, even more complete than that which we have witnessed. At least, I know of no instance. How much difference and breaking off may take place depends upon the patience and moderation of our people, as you say, and particularly of O'Connell, with respect to whose possible course I cannot pretend to form a conjecture. Adieu.

CHAPTER XV

LAST YEARS

1841–1848

LORD MELBOURNE went into Opposition very philosophically. Though Peel's cautious policy gave little occasion for an attack, he was regular in his attendance, and spoke frequently during the two following sessions.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. South Street, October 7, 1841.

I WILL return you Duncannon's letter to-morrow; I wish to have a copy of it made. Yours rather puzzles me. I understand Ellice says that he cannot see his way in public affairs, and if he cannot see it nobody else can. I own I do not, and this makes me very cautious in either taking or recommending a step to be taken.

If the only one proposed relates to the sending of circulars, this may be safely left to the time at which circulars are to be sent, and this I should advise. It seems to me that we cannot commence another session without fully explaining to O'Connell, to the Radicals, and to the country the grounds upon which we mean to act, and the objects which we have, as well as those which we have not, in view. But how and when this is to be done it is rather difficult to decide. I will write again. I have no news but what is in the newspapers.

P.S.—It amuses me in John, Duke of Bedford's,

Journal[1] how calmly and as a matter of course he tells of being examined by the mob, pelted with brickbats, baited with bulldogs, &c., &c.

The same to the same. South Street, October 13, 1841.

I THINK Charles Elliot by no means so clearly wrong in this business as in the former.[2] He always contrives so as to have to stop the force just at the moment of action. This is most unlucky. It is just as if you were to order a pack of fox-hounds to be whipped off just as they were running into their fox. Only conceive the rage of huntsman, whipper-in, and dogs. But he has got a large sum of money, and got it down; he has not given up much, as he did before when he agreed to go back from Canton; and he has not prejudiced the subsequent operations or affected the ultimate decision.

A dinner in London will not only be the proper time for a declaration, but, if it takes place, it will be an occasion upon which you may hardly be able to avoid making one. I want to go into Derbyshire, but I am afraid of some address or something of that sort. Melbourne itself is a large manufacturing and political village; it is twenty-five miles from Leicester, seventeen from Nottingham, eight from Derby—rather an inflammable neighbourhood. Perhaps, however, they may leave me quite alone, and if they do not, I must manage as well as I can.[3]

[1] Lord John Russell had recently published the first volume of the *Correspondence of John, fourth Duke of Bedford.*

[2] A preliminary treaty, disavowed by the Chinese authorities and disapproved at home. Elliot stopped the advance of the troops on Canton, and admitted the city to a ransom of 1,250,000*l.* He was soon afterwards recalled (Appendix to vol. i. of Sir H. Taylor's *Autobiography*).

[3] He received addresses from Melbourne and Derby, and in reply gave a review of his administration.

The same to the same. South Street, August 6, 1842.

I HAVE this morning received your letter, and I ought, as you say, before this to have answered your former one of the 16th of last month.

I do not understand that I have at all pledged myself to the present corn laws. All that I said upon Brougham's motion was, that I thought it nonsense to go into a Parliamentary enquiry now into the amount and causes of distress, or to stir at present a change of the laws which had been so recently settled.

I have never believed in the amount or extent of distress, because I saw clearly that it was made use of as an instrument to effect a particular object, and the particular statements that were made, if examined, never did bear out or support the general propositions.

We shall now, as you say, have an opportunity of fully considering this subject, and that with increased experience. At the same time, I very much dislike that a great question of policy should be much affected by an event so casual, so uncertain, so much the creature of chance and accident as the getting in or the yield of a harvest. My esoteric doctrine (but to be dissembled to the multitude upon questions of this character) is that, if you entertain any doubt, it is safest to take the unpopular side in the first instance. The transition from the unpopular is easy and prosperous travelling. But from the popular to the unpopular the ascent is so steep and rugged that it is impossible to master it.

I intended to have said something about the sliding scale, &c., on Radnor's motion, but the debate languished and it did not seem a good opportunity. Surely we should be sufficiently clear and distinct upon that subject, and we should condemn it to more advantage after we had seen the working of the new Act, which has certainly hitherto operated differently from the old.

I am more and more unwilling to take upon myself the responsibility of the shock of the sudden change which I apprehend from a completely free importation.

We know so little beforehand upon the subject. Only consider the experience of this year. All the beginning of it was passed in declaring that there was no corn left in the country, that there would be famine before the harvest, and that nothing could avert it but immediately opening the ports. Now what is said?—that there is much more corn in the country than was thought for, and the prices fall every market. It rains to-day, and perhaps with the rain all the old language will revive. I do not much care what the farmers think or say, not even those wonderfully intelligent Scotch ones.

They will pass your bribery Bill as it has come up from the House of Commons. Nobody in the House of Lords cares the least about it.

Pray remember me most kindly to Minto and Lady Minto, and all of them. I love them much though they may not think it. Just hint that Plumridge seems to me to be rather an ass.[1] What business had he to second that old fool Burdett's motion about Warner? I do not see the object of asking Aberdeen about Ashburton. Adieu.

The same to the same. Brocket Hall. October 7, 1842.

EVERY one who is acquainted with or has considered the subject seems to me to have come to your opinion, that the arrangement made by Lord Ashburton is a bad one,[2] and that we ought to have had, and might have had, better terms.

[1] Captain Plumridge seconded a motion for a Select Committee to enquire into the negotiations between the Government and Captain Warner, the inventor of a submarine explosive. In the course of the debate, Burdett accused Lord Melbourne of having lost the Admiralty Report on the subject.

[2] For the settlement of the questions at issue with the United States.

I have always myself leaned to the opinion that it was not a difficult matter to blow up war between the two countries, and that the internal embarrassments, which Palmerston relies upon as utterly disabling her from hostilities, were in fact, or might be turned into, stimulants to them, and therefore I have been much inclined to think any settlement better than none. I, therefore, am rather of your opinion with respect to the manner in which the matter shall be dealt with in Parliament. But this will to a certain degree depend upon circumstances—such as the feeling of the country, the feeling of the party, and the general effect likely to be produced by the language held; and therefore I should think that the safest course would be to state the objections to the treaty strongly, as indeed has already been done, and to leave the actual measures to be taken to be decided upon when Parliament is about to meet. Palmerston is already aware of my opinion upon this subject, and I should expect that he concurs in it, but I will write to him again.[1] The Duke of Bedford, whom I met yesterday with the Duchess at Welwyn, showed me your letters to him, which contain very much my views.

If we had a majority in the House of Commons it would do to vote them out upon as well as any other question, just as the Coalition in 1782 voted out Lord Shelburne for a treaty which I take to have been as good a one as we could have made in the circumstance; but as we have not a majority it may be allowable to think a little what is best for the country and the world.

You slipped by from the north of the island to the

[1] Lord Palmerston did not concur, and in the following session attacked the so-called 'Ashburton surrender' with great vigour, but without much result.

south unexpectedly, silently, and without giving notice, or I should have pressed you and Lady John to have stopped here for a day or two. I hope we shall see you when you come to town, if you are in a movable state. Remember me to Lady John.

On October 23 he had an attack of paralysis. It was very slight, and he speedily rallied; but he was never the same man afterwards, and seldom ventured to speak in the House of Lords. His faculties, however, remained perfectly unimpaired, and his opinions on public affairs were eagerly sought for by his old colleagues.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Brocket Hall, January 5, 1843.

IF you have thoroughly made up your mind and are prepared to write, I wish you would inform me what language you mean to hold respecting corn when Parliament meets. Of course you have dismissed from your mind the notion that the Government will move upon that subject. Peel would be an imbecile if he were to break up his party and probably his administration in that manner. He will remain quietly in his present position.[1] If I were he I should not mind the Anti-Corn League and their abettors. There is but one party in the country that can create a real feeling and agitation, and that is the Government. When it takes up a question it becomes serious, till then it is little or nothing.

Clarendon, who has been here, seems to think that it would be unwise to stir this question much at first, and that it is impossible at present to argue that there has been sufficient experience of the present law to enable anyone to pronounce decisively upon its merits or demerits.

[1] Not a good prophecy, as the sessions of 1843 to 1846 were to show. Lord Melbourne was highly indignant with Sir Robert Peel's conversion to Free Trade, and broke out at Windsor with 'Ma'am, it's a damned dishonest act' (*Greville*, part ii. vol. ii. p. 351).

Lord Ellenborough's strange proceedings in India form the subject of the following letters:—

Lord John Russell to Lord Melbourne. February 6, 1843.

I DO not think Ellenborough has any claims for indulgence; his attack on Auckland is most offensive and unjust. His Somnauth proclamation[1] is not a mere toleration of Hindoo superstition, but an exaltation of it. However we may pay respect to the Roman Catholic religion, one is not bound to say that liquefying the blood of St. Januarius is a subject of adoration. They were not pressed about the order to retreat because they promised to give all the papers.

Peel evidently means to side with the strongest about corn. Robarts tells me the opinion in the City is that the Corn Laws are doomed. Still, if the country is quiet, and the League lose their popularity, he will stick by his law.

G. W. Wood says all the moderate men in Lancashire have now joined the League. He says also, that in all their discussions Peel's Bill of last year has not been mentioned. Nobody considers it as any change worth speaking of.

The discovery of Franklin's map is a curious one.[2] The Duke of Sussex dines here to-day. The Queen is much affected by Drummond's death,[3] and Lady Peel is in a dreadful state of nerves.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John

I ENTIRELY agree with you in your estimate as to the relative imprudence and culpability of

[1] The famous proclamation directing the removal of the gates of Somnauth to Agra.

[2] It was discovered in the Foreign Office while search was being made for original documents on the Boundary question.

[3] Sir Robert Peel's private secretary, who was shot by a madman.

Russell. Brocket Hall, February 13, 1843.

Ellenborough's proclamation, and the one of October 1 has hardly yet been sufficiently analysed and excogitated. It gives a false account of the grounds upon which the expedition across the Indus was undertaken. Nor is it true that Shah Soojah's throne was only held among insurrections, nor that his death was preceded by anarchy. It also says that Afghanistan will be evacuated quite coolly and easily, and as if such a step were a matter of perfect indifference. A single step in retreat in India is a serious matter, and draws on far greater consequences than the mere relinquishment of the territory from which you withdraw the troops. Abandoning Afghanistan is very possibly also abandoning Bengal, and recrossing the Indus may be at the same time recrossing the Hoogly and the Ganges. Amongst Oriental nations impression is strong, and leads to great results.

I think a motion for enquiry into the effect of the Corn Laws is the best that can be made; but perhaps you had better wait and see what Rice does in the House of Lords. He writes to me very confidently of making a strong case, and if he does make such a case as is likely to make an impression upon the public—for a case may be very strong and have nothing popular about it—you will be better able to judge whether or not to follow it up in the House of Commons.

Lord Lansdowne to Lord Melbourne. London, February 14 [1843].

You will have perceived that since the first day of the session we have had little but law to amuse us in the House of Lords and an occasional speech from Brougham on the French debates. He told me the first day that I saw him that his having assisted at the opening of the French Chambers would be of great use, as it would

enable him to 'take a part' in their discussions; and he has been busying himself accordingly. He calls at the French Embassy in the morning to invite their attendance.

I have been able to give as yet but a general glance at the Indian papers, which were presented last night, but have only been circulated this morning. As far as I can make them out as yet they show a great deal of activity and energy in Ellenborough from the time the advance and reoccupation of Afghanistan was resolved upon, but leave him open to animadversion on one or two points—the first proclamation, which is highly censurable, but forms no part of the military arrangements;[1] the order which distinctly appears to [command] Nott to retire at once, and which must have been disobeyed by Nott, though no remonstrance or explanation on his part appears, being confined perhaps to private communications;[2] and the foolish directions about the gates.

I trust the last week's severe weather does not affect or retard your progress.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. Brocket Hall, January 18, 1844.

I HAVE been again looking over your letter, which I received yesterday. I certainly see no reason for abandoning in principle a fixed duty upon the importation of corn, but I do not see that we have much to say that is either strong or new against the recent law and the sliding scale as it is now arranged. It has not brought in too much corn during the past year, nor has it brought it in in inconvenient times and in inconvenient quantities, which was the first charge against the system. I think

[1] The orders for retreat.

[2] That was so. General Nott acted on his own responsibilit

that I gather, from a more attentive inspection of your words, the revisions which you would propose for the better government of Ireland. You say that it is necessary to give the Catholics what was promised at the Union and in 1829—*i.e.* equality of right, equality of preferment, and the full benefit of the government at Dublin. This can only be obtained better by placing in preferments those who will act upon the principles upon which we acted from 1835 to 1841. You add that it is requisite to lay a foundation for conciliating the Catholic clergy to the State. On this point—and of course its objects, payments, and provision—I have seen a letter from Ellice, in which he says, any attempt made by any body to provide a public provision for the Roman Catholic clergy will at once issue in a failure as signal and decisive, and much of the same character, as the failure of the Education scheme last year. I fear this will be found right. This appears to me to afford a strong reason for thinking a little before we encumber ourselves unreservedly with this matter. If you persist in this matter, I strongly advise you to communicate previously, through Duncannon, with O'Connell, and attempt to learn from him whether there are any measures, and what they are, which will satisfy the Repeal party and obtain their support. Adieu.

Much has been written about the loneliness of Lord Melbourne's last years. As a matter of fact those statements have little or no foundation. It is true that Lord Melbourne, as old age and illness crept upon him, may have fancied himself neglected, and may from time to time have let fall expressions tinged with weariness of the world. But what his friends and relations could do for him they did zealously. Lady Palmerston and Lady Holland, until her death in 1845, were unceasing in their attentions to him, and Lord and Lady Beauvale made a point of spending the winter months at Brocket. It is to be hoped

that in their company he repented him of his saying of former years, 'I would rather have a man about me when I am ill; I think it requires strong health to put up with a woman.'[1] Among his papers also are to be found many and many a letter from his old colleagues and private friends, while Mr. Thomas Young sent him long budgets dealing with every topic under the sun. The following letters from Mrs. Norton and Mr. Ellice appear to be of sufficient interest to be given here:—

Hon. Mrs. Norton to Lord Melbourne. St. Leonards-on-Sea, December 6 [1844?].

PRAY do write. I am ill in bed myself, and if you don't write I shall think you are *ill in bed too*. I did imagine I had coaxed you into scribbling by asking you that information for my poem. You always say you are glad to teach me things and supply me with scraps of knowledge. How shall I get on if I am so neglected by my tutor?

The boy's tutor, whose name is Mr. Murray, and who is curate here, is the first gentleman of Scotch extraction I ever met who knew nothing whatever about his clan or his family. In general they will ferret you out their *roots* (to say nothing of their *branches*) with the sagacity of truffle dogs; but here's a fellow who asks what Dunmore's title is, and *who* is the elder branch of the Murray clan? There is a passage in my poem about the Church disturbances in Scotland against those who want to elect their own ministers.[2] Breadalbane wanted me to leave it out, but I have been obsti-

[1] Leslie's *Autobiography* (i. p. 169). It was Leslie whom Lord Melbourne asked how it was that Raphael was employed by the Pope to paint the walls of the Vatican. The answer was, 'Because of his great excellence.' 'But was not his uncle, Bramante, architect to the Pope?' 'I believe Bramante was his uncle.' 'Then it was a job, you may be sure.'

[2] *Child of the Islands*, a poem on the birth of the Prince of Wales, published in 1845, which would apparently place the date of these letters at the previous winter. The passage begins, 'The taught should choose their teacher; be it so!'

nate. I told him what you had said about the difference between being *in* and *out* of office. He laughed very much, and said he should send you a *whole deer* to make up.

The same to the same. St. Leonards-on-Sea.

How can you turn such a deaf ear and such a turned-up nose to the claims of old Jack Morris? Why don't you help the man that helped your brother at Westminster, in the good old days when *you* wasn't weak and sick and *he* wasn't faint and starving? Do you think the God who made Jack Morris and you does not judge it as selfishness? Something also, perhaps, of ingratitude. For, no doubt, when he had his riches, and his twenty-stall stable, and his Westminster votes, very civil words you all said to him. Oh! rouse your sluggish old heart to write to some one for him; and don't fly in the face of Heaven, who built up your own face into the picture of honesty and generosity, thereby (alas!) creating much mistaken trust and vain expectation in the hearts of all those whose ill-judging eyes have gazed on your countenance!

Why don't you write? Who have you got at Brocket? Does Emily hang her long gowns up, like banners of victory, in the cupboards? Does Lady Holland *cut herself in four* to help and serve you? Are Fanny Jocelyn's soft purple eyes at your table under the lamps? or does the 'Minny' who rivals our own Georgy' rouse you to any love and admiration of your own relations?[1]

Adieu. I am extremely busy, yet I write to you. You are not busy, yet you do not write to me. I abjure the world, and will sell all I have and give to the poor.

[1] Lady Palmerston's two daughters were married to Lord Shaftesbury and Lord Jocelyn. Georgy is the Duchess of Somerset.

To-morrow is Brin's [1] birthday, and we have ordered roast pig for dinner.

The same to the same. Thursday, January 22.

I AM glad the interest of your gates made you write directly, but you disturbed yourself unnecessarily. I have no enthusiasms which make me forget what you say to me, and you told me at the time all that you have taken the trouble to write per post. If you had *read* as carefully as I *listen* you would have seen that in my letter I mention having promised *designs*, and that I merely repeat the observations of others when I talk of Baldock and his triumphal entries.

It has since struck me that as the place is in fact Mrs. Lamb's (and probably, also, the projected improvement) her leisure would be well employed, and her taste better satisfied by choosing them herself. Mrs. S—— does not care about politics for the best of all reasons, which is, that she cannot by any effort be brought to comprehend them, even in the shallow way we women do. She takes them, as Helen [2] does (only that Helen *could* understand them), and Nell's way I will recount. Helen was ill in bed; I thought ——'s epistle might amuse her, and took it accordingly. She put out one hand in a languid, deprecating manner, and said, 'Don't look so eager, Caroline, and above all things don't read it to me if there *are any politics in it*, for I know I shall be bored and tired to death.'

As to S——, you are wrong if you think him stupid. He may be wrong-headed, but he is a fine-spirited creature, full of information, though habitually silent; and those who are against you may be with you. Mrs.

[1] Her second son, afterwards Lord Grantley.
[2] Lady Dufferin.

S—— has a number of set phrases of the 'jobbing' of the Whigs, and the 'dishonesty' of the Whigs, &c., &c., but neither for the past nor for the present has she a definite idea. She told Lady H—— *before Lord H——* that Mr. C—— said he could have married her on his own terms; and on S—— interposing, she said, '*You know you told me so yourself.*' This has made a family quarrel, and she is not yet convinced it was a foolish thing to do.

Georgy has sent for me to sit with her, as she is ill and low—so farewell.

Mr. E. Ellice to Lord Melbourne. Inverness, August 27, 1845.

I HAVE sent the Inverness newspaper, published during the sitting of the General Assembly of the Free Church here, and containing a report of the speeches and proceedings; not that I expect you to wade through the whole of them, trash as well as energy and eloquence, but that you may see the progress of the movement, and judge of its influence on the social conditions and future fortunes of this country. . . . Their great object is to secure the permanence of their institution by raising funds, not only for building churches, but schools and houses for their minister and schoolmaster. . . . Nobody can mistake the serious or important character of the movement, or the ability, energy, and devotion with which the leaders are conducting it. Guthrie, Dr. Candlish,[1] and their celebrated preachers go from meeting to meeting to preach in all the northern parishes, and to hold meetings of their local presbyteries in furtherance of the objects of the Assembly.

[1] Guthrie was a celebrated preacher at St. John's Free Church, Edinburgh. Dr. Candlish became the ruling spirit of the Free Church after the death of Chalmers.

They have enlisted the *whole* northern population, with few exceptions, in their ranks. . . . They will form the front rank in the battle that must soon be fought between voluntaryism and establishments. In which rank will the Irish Catholics ultimately be placed? If the majority of the people of Ireland and of Scotland are to be thrown with the English Dissenters into the ranks of voluntaryism, the Church of England in both countries, with its Puseyites and others, will have a hard fight to maintain itself. I doubt whether it can number among its leaders more talent, energy, or zeal than distinguish those of the Free Church here. It will receive little assistance or support from what the Free Kirk people call the 'residuaries' of the Scotch establishment, who seem to be asleep while this movement is awakening every other soul in the country.

Lord John Russell to Lord Melbourne. Friday, May 22, [1846].

I HEAR that you are quoted as being disposed to vote for a fixed duty in committee in the House of Lords. I have agreed with Lansdowne to have a meeting at Lansdowne House to-morrow, of peers only, to consider the present condition of affairs.[1] I wish to state to them that I could not accept a fixed duty in lieu of the present Bill. I hope you will not be a party to throwing out the Bill. It must lead to that violent agitation on this subject which you have always apprehended. The League might not be able to do much of themselves, but with Peel and the Whig members of the House of Commons to lead them their efforts will be powerful, and stir up society to the bottom.

[1] The meeting was summoned in order to prevent a coalition between the Protectionists and the Whigs who were for a fixed duty. According to Greville, Lord Melbourne made a bitter speech against Peel, but declared himself prepared to go along with his friends.

Those who throw out the present Bill will cause this agitation, and *cui bono*?

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. South Street, May 22, 1846.

I HAVE received your letter, and when I receive a summons from Lansdowne for to-morrow I will take care to attend. I think that upon the whole I agree with you. The report of my views has probably arisen from my having said, that if a resolution in favour of a fixed duty was moved in the House of Lords I should feel a difficulty in voting against it, as I had myself moved a similar resolution in 1842. This is as much as I have said.

Although conscious of his gradual decline Lord Melbourne clung to the idea that he would be Minister once more. He professed himself ready to take office in case the Government was overthrown in 1844,[1] and when the Liberals returned to power in 1846 he felt mortified at not having a place offered him in the new Cabinet.

Lord John then wrote to him a kind letter: –

Lord John Russell to Lord Melbourne. July 3, 1846.

I SUBMITTED to the Queen yesterday the list of a new Ministry. I have not proposed to you to form a part of it, because I do not think your health is equal to the fatigues which any office must entail. For although there are offices with little business in themselves, the Parliamentary work has increased so greatly that a Lord Privy Seal, for instance, must take charge of committees, and be constantly engaged in assisting the leader of the House of Lords.

I propose to put William Cowper[2] into his old place in the Treasury.

[1] *Greville*, part ii. vol. ii. p. 233.

[2] The late Lord Mount Temple.

Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell. South Street, July 3, 1846.

You have judged very rightly and kindly in making me no offer. I am subject to such frequent accesses of illness as render me incapable of any exertion.

I am glad of what you intend about William Cowper. I do not think that he would mind being left out himself, but it would have been very unpalatable to his mother.

Here Lord Melbourne's correspondence comes practically to an end. One or two letters there are of a later date, but they are almost illegible and, so far as their purport can be gathered, unimportant.[1] He was well enough to vote on the Jewish Disabilities Bill on May 25, 1848, but that was his last appearance in public, and on November 24 of the same year he died.

[1] It is curious that he should have written to a colleague so far back as September 1835, 'I believe there is no surer sign of weakness or decline than bad handwriting.' Lord Melbourne's handwriting was never good, but it was not much worse in 1845 than it was in 1835. After 1845 it became very difficult.

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